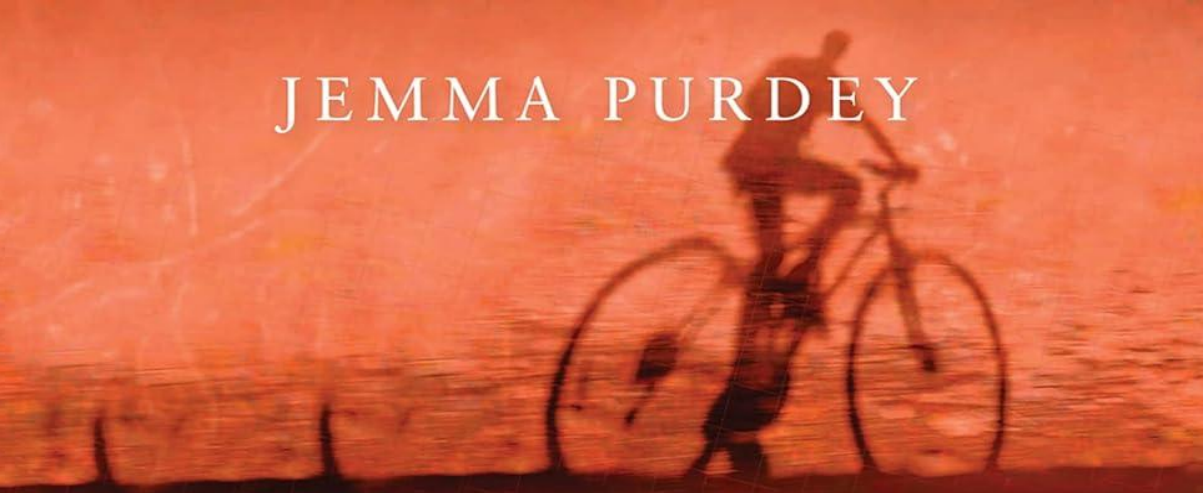
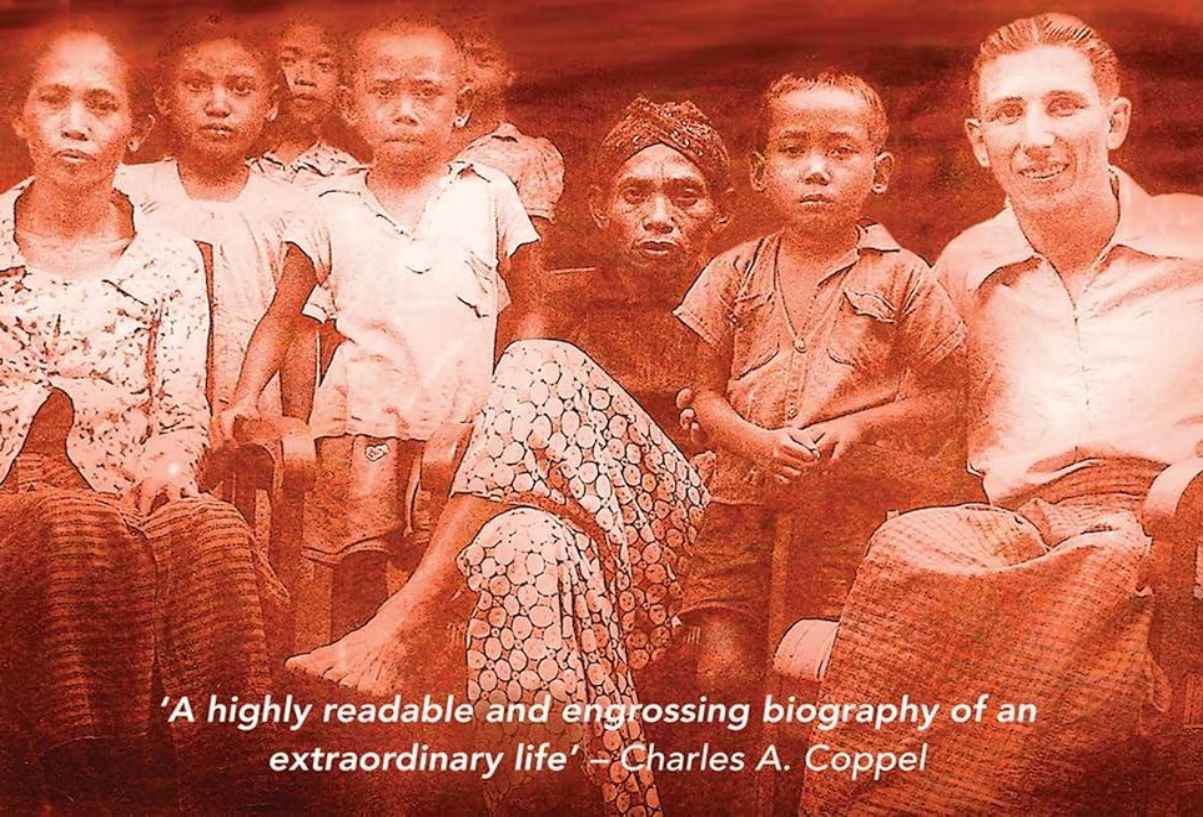
JEMMA PURDEY



FROM VIENNA TO YOGYAKARTA

THE LIFE OF HERB FEITH



'A highly readable and engrossing biography of an extraordinary life' – Charles A. Coppel

MONASH
University

FROM VIENNA TO YOGYAKARTA

Jemma Purdey is an Australian Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow in the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies and the School of Political and Social Inquiry at Monash University. Her research interests include Indonesia's ethnic Chinese minority, violence, human rights and Indonesian politics. She is author of *Anti-Chinese Violence in Indonesia, 1996–1999* (NUS Publishing, 2006).

JEMMA PURDEY

FROM VIENNA TO YOGYAKARTA

THE LIFE OF HERB FEITH

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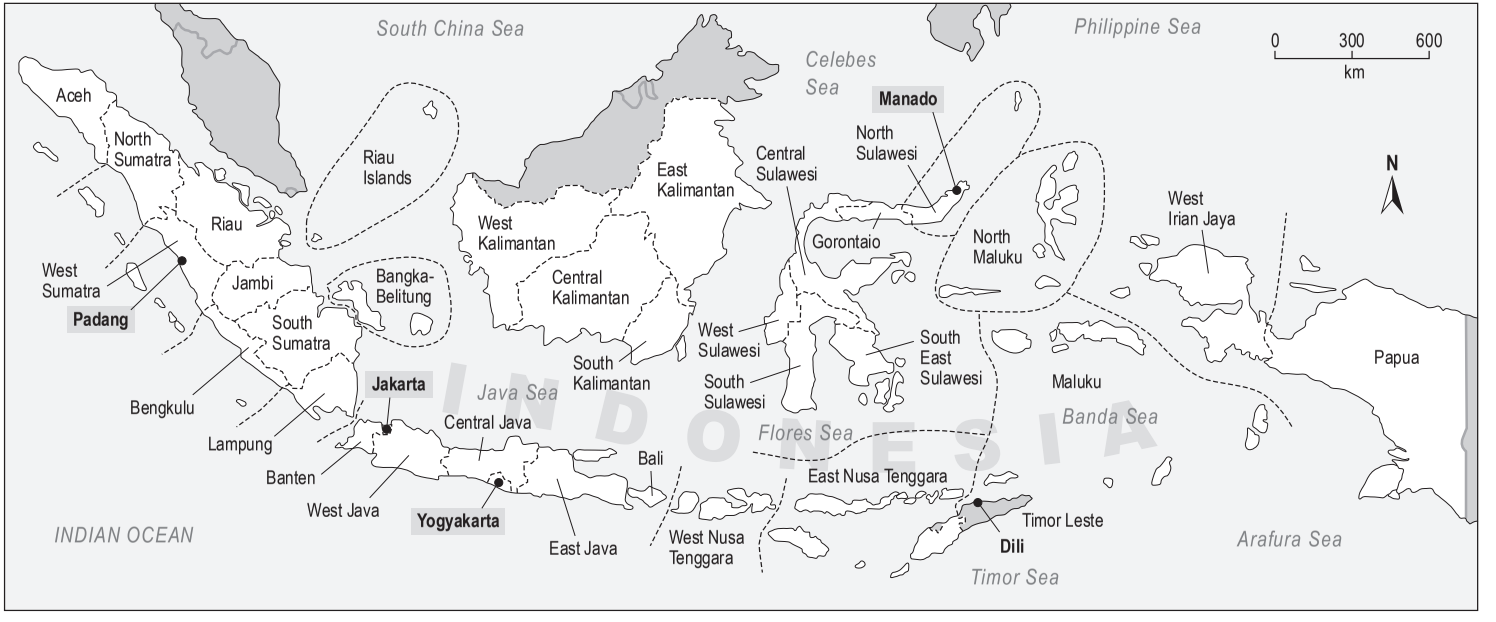

Map of Indonesia, with places of particular interest highlighted.

Introduction

HERB FEITH WAS a path-breaker, an originator of new ways of viewing the world at large and the world in which we as Australians live. He was a pioneer of Australian international volunteerism, of people-to-people engagement with our nearest neighbour, Indonesia, and of the study of its language, politics and society. He was a pioneer in peace activism and teaching, both in Australia and beyond its shores. From Melbourne to Jakarta, he is often remembered by those who knew him as one of the nicest people they have ever met. His generosity of time and concern endeared him to the people of Indonesia, including and especially the ordinary people he met. At the same time, he was something of a celebrity in that nation's intellectual circles. As a rare being – an Australian public intellectual with an interest in and deep knowledge of Asia – Herb also featured in Australia's intellectual milieu, but with far less impact. His way of life, in which material things meant little and deprivation played a part, saw him lead

by example, by what he said and by what he was, rather than by his writings, which diminished in number in his later years. His preoccupations with balancing scholarship and teaching with a moral impulse to activism and to follow emerging trends were constant, powerful and life-shaping forces.

Herb's sudden accidental death on 15 November 2001, a week after his seventy-first birthday, left his family, friends and colleagues from around the world shocked and alarmed by their loss. The manner of his death, an accident between a cyclist and a suburban passenger train, contributed even more to this sense of tragedy. Biographer Hermione Lee writes that it is 'unusual for death in biography to occur as random, disorderly, without meaning, without relation to the life lived and without conclusiveness'.[1] However, Herb's death, like most, defies such a rendering. His close friend Goenawan Mohamad, Indonesian journalist, publisher and poet, wrote after Herb's death that the manner of his dying, so violently in a collision between modern machine and simple pedal power, was in such extreme contrast to the way Herb had lived his life. Mohamad described his friend as 'he who would never disturb those around him with ambition or coercion, nor quarrel with anything or anyone'.[2]

It is fair to say that Herb Feith was not averse to the idea of his biography being written. In the late 1990s he had started discussions with his friend Angus McIntyre, who was interested in editing Herb's letters from Indonesia in the 1950s for possible publication. Two Indonesian students in Australia in the 1980s and 1990s, Fachry Ali and Bob Hadiwinata, had interviewed Herb, and both had written intellectual biographies of sorts. Hadiwinata's work comprises a manuscript for a book in Indonesian, to which Herb contributed a great deal of comment and guidance, but was never published. Herb's own attempts at autobiography

were brief and not entirely satisfying. As he said at the Australian Association of Asian Studies (ASAA) conference in 1984, 'I found that autobiography can be very fascinating but also that it's a lot harder than I thought.' A two-page entry Herb wrote in 1989 for a publication about peace studies people in Australia and New Zealand is a concise yet comprehensive outline of his main influences and the trends he followed in his work on Indonesia, particularly peace studies.[3] Late in his life, Herb's project interests were indeed reflective ones. They included writing about foreign Indonesianists and the role of values in their work, indicating a return to his early interest in the way foreigners approach the study of Indonesia. Perhaps more compelling, however, or just a project Herb saw as more achievable, was a planned book of biographies of Indonesian intellectuals he knew. As his friend Gerry van Klinken later observed, perhaps it was intended to be a memoir projected through his relationships with others.

Just weeks after his death Herb's colleagues at Monash University and from the activist communities to which he belonged started to think about how the legacy of his contribution as scholar, inspiring teacher and peace activist could be marked. In 2002 a group of these former colleagues and friends established the Herb Feith Foundation at Monash University, and in 2007 it appointed the first Feith Chair for the Study of Indonesia. This biography is one part of the commemoration of Herb Feith's life initiated by the Foundation, and my scope as biographer has been unlimited and independent.

I approached this task with a primary goal of writing a biography that would be of interest to and could be read by a wide readership. In his life, Herb Feith reached into many facets of Australian and Indonesian society and beyond, not only through his intellectual engagement within academia and as a public intellectual

in the broader sense, but also as an advocate, activist and friend to many, particularly the oppressed, in these countries and elsewhere in the world. He is remembered as much for his contribution to scholarship as he is for his passion for education, peace activism and the development of cross-cultural understanding.

Sources

My first and last conversation of any length with Herb Feith took place the day before he passed away. We both attended a seminar given by my friend Kate McGregor in the History Department of Melbourne University on the work of Herb's old friend and controversial figure, Indonesian historian Nugroho Notosusanto. I remember Herb asking Kate a thought-provoking question on some topic or another, and afterwards he sought me out. Herb asked me about my thesis then in process, and was especially keen to know when I hoped to finish it. My doctoral supervisor Charles Coppel had himself been a student of Herb. I knew Charles and Herb were still close friends and that Charles had valued Herb's advice on a project on violence in Indonesia, with which I had assisted him a year earlier. I remember Herb's particularly sharp gaze, which seemed to hold me quite close to him and made me sure that he was 100 per cent focused on me. The gaze was at the same time probing and reassuring. Some years later, in the course of researching this biography, my many interviewees were almost uniform in recounting similar experiences with Herb, noting that he was what might be called an active listener. People told me that after spending time with Herb they often felt, as I had, that they had talked more than they expected to. Herb got a lot out of his interactions with people, however brief. Most of all, Herb was interested that day in my connection with a community of

Australian and Indonesian nuns of the Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) in Yogyakarta with whom I had stayed during some of my fieldwork in 1999.

I had also hoped to see Herb on that trip in early September, but as it turned out he was in East Timor to observe the ballot. I did, however, meet Betty Feith in her office at Atma Jaya University with her colleague Andreas Susanto. I remember that Betty was anxious and distracted and keen to go home so that she could follow the news from Timor on BBC radio. The FCJs also gathered around their radio to hear the results of the ballot, full of expectation and trepidation about what it would bring. I did not know that Betty had, at that point, not heard from Herb for several days.

My subsequent encounters with Herb have been mediated through the memories of his family, friends, colleagues, admirers and students. My key informants were Herb's wife Betty and children David, Annie and Rob. Recordings of interviews that David and his wife Karen Coffield conducted with his grandfather Arthur Feith and Rob with Herb comprise further vital sources, particularly for Herb's family background and early childhood. More than a hundred interviews I conducted around Australia, Indonesia, East Timor, the United States and Europe have been crucial for piecing together his life and its impact on others.

It must be said that at times the accounts given to me by respondents from Jakarta to Brisbane to Ithaca were so overwhelmingly similar that the challenge of finding alternative versions or contradictory perspectives on my subject was considerable. However, in the end I decided there was much to be said for the consistent picture emerging from the interviews. Together with the oral sources, paper and text – boxes and boxes of it – including his large and eclectic list of published works, formed

the deep well from which I drew my understanding of Herb. I had open access to Herb's extensive archive of papers at the National Library of Australia, in approximately twenty-eight cartons on fifteen metres of shelf space, and to the considerable archive of his materials held at Monash University Archives.

Many recall Herb as having the appearance and giving the impression of someone less than organised, perhaps even scattered. Spending time with his archives quickly does away with that idea. These were piles of filed and labelled manila folders containing a lifetime of letters (often both to and from correspondents), small handwritten memos on scraps of recycled paper containing his random thoughts and notes from myriad conversations with informants, students and friends. The care he took upon his retirement from Monash to transfer the contents of his office (more or less) to the university's archive demonstrated his intention then for his work, letters and various ephemera to be a lasting and lively documentation of Australia's engagement with Indonesia, the study of Indonesia and of an extraordinary life spent between these two places.

After his death Herb's family approached the National Library of Australia with an offer to donate the many, many more boxes of letters, essays, clippings and other papers, in a less preserved state, from his office and garage at his home. Together these two archives presented me with a comprehensive record of Herb's life, as he himself had documented, organised and sorted it. Although he was not a diarist, Herb was a wonderful letter-writer, and the many periods of his life during which he was away from home and family gave him ample opportunity to chronicle his activities, the people he met, his feelings and thoughts. His family and friends were also excellent and regular correspondents. Together with Herb's idiosyncratic proclivity for jotting down memos and

notes, which often took on the role of a journal, and his propensity never to throw anything away, this *almost* made for a biographer's perfect storm. The great challenge, of course, was the task of sifting, filtering and weighing the evidence gleaned from his publications and from my extensive interviews with those who knew him well, alongside the evidence he accumulated in his personal and academic archive.

Herb's library of books was donated to the library of the Timor-Leste Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), in Dili where it is housed in their offices, a former colonial prison and Indonesian military torture centre. When I visited CAVR in September 2005, Herb's books comprised the majority of the Centre's library, and the staff had erected a display in honour of him. Books in the collection included those by authors who influenced Herb first in his teenage years, Victor Gollancz and E.H. Carr, as well as those of later influences, Ivan Illich, Paulo Freire and Tagore; there are many books, essays and pamphlets documenting Indonesia's political history and that of East Timor from the 1960s until the 1990s. There I also found the book awarded to Herb in 1942 for 'First Prize' in his Saturday School class at Temple Beth Israel Liberal Synagogue in Caulfield.

Themes

This biography documents the story of Herb Feith's unlikely journey from Nazi-occupied Vienna to Indonesia, the nation that became the focus for his work, scholarship and activism for fifty years. This story begins in the 1930s, continues to 1940s Melbourne where his family found refuge, and on to the establishment of his lifelong connection with Indonesia in 1951 and his later academic achievements. Herb's engagement with Indonesia

saw him play multiple roles, as a pioneer in relations between Australia and Indonesia, a civil servant working alongside Indonesians on a local salary, a leading scholar, observer, analyst and teacher of Indonesia's political system and society, and an activist fighting for a better outcome for the impoverished, oppressed and marginalised in Indonesia and around the world.

Herb Feith was a direct witness to fifty years of Indonesian history. The telling of Herb's life story reveals a history of Indonesian nationhood, beginning with its failed early attempt at parliamentary democracy in the 1950s (his study of which is still regarded as the seminal account[4]) through to autocratic rule and repression from the mid-1960s until *reformasi* and democracy were reborn in the late 1990s. It is also a history of Australia maturing as a nation after World War II, as it carved out its own identity, and of its deepening engagement with our nearest neighbour and the Asia–Pacific region, providing a window on the post-colonial world. It tells of Australians like Herb who led this engagement in the 1950s out of a drive not only to do good but also to discover and cross borders and cultures of all kinds. Their legacy survives today in the deep and complex relationship between Indonesia and Australia and in much broader global networks connecting 'peace-minded' people around the world.

Herb Feith rarely lived his life as others thought he should. From his childhood experiences as an outsider in Nazi Vienna in the 1930s he had learnt to be culturally flexible and adaptive, as he did again in 1940s Australia and 1950s Indonesia. He understood what it took to blend in while retaining a strong sense of himself. His cross-cultural experiences provided Herb with a set of what he referred to as his 'craft skills', which he recognised as giving him the ability to cross or transcend cultural and social divisions. These skills were apparent in his interpersonal style of

engagement – a style that was open, genuine, respectful and generous.

Some scholars in Indonesia and Indonesianists, including his friends Onghokham and Ben Anderson, remarked upon Herb's lack of interest in 'culture' – literature and the arts, as they defined it – as being a gap in his understanding. However, the great number of stories recounted to me by Indonesians about how 'Herb was more Indonesian than Indonesians' discounts the suggestion that he didn't understand or appreciate culture in a social and holistic sense. I would argue that Herb possessed the skill of transcending cultural and societal difference bodily, behaviourally, linguistically and intellectually. He could easily blend into a room full of Indonesians. Herb had the skill and inclination to gauge or judge from his interactions with individuals what was important to them, what they strive for in their lives, and to respect those things. This was a key feature of his contact with people, and it left enduring impressions on those he met, particularly Indonesians. It was also a main tool in his set of 'skills' towards his lifelong quest for morality in scholarship and engaged intellectualism.

His friendships and human interactions are key clues to understanding Herb. He was clearly buoyed by contact with others; he loved to listen, to probe and question. This was the way he gained a great deal of his knowledge. Unlike most scholars, I think, Herb's insight was achieved largely by way of this interpersonal skill-set, rather than primarily from books and models, although he would process what he learned in a very systematic and structured way. It explains his need to visit Indonesia often, to talk to people there, to witness, in order to be free to know what was happening. It was a model of experiential learning that he passed on to his many students and friends. An appreciation of Herb's ability to connect with people from all walks of life and in a wide

range of cultural contexts is critical in order to understand his approach to his work and activism.

This is ultimately a very human story of struggle between a man's intellectual ambitions and pursuits, his work and family responsibilities, and his moral compulsion to act. Where did Herb's very strong moral compass come from? Herb was a spiritual being who later in his life described himself as a 'syncretistic Jew'. Throughout his life he was drawn to religion in many forms, from the Student Christian Movement to the Quakers, Buddhism and the Uniting and Catholic churches; it was a journey that he described was one of attempting 'to make my Judaic religion the starting point of learning to live religion in the plural'.[5] Like most human beings, Herb was complex, multidimensional and sometimes contradictory; he was at the same time self-assured and vulnerable, a great intellect and a confused student, a leader and a follower. After he died many people remembered Herb as akin to a saintly figure in their lives – a gentle, tender, yet feisty advocate for the oppressed and for just causes. Herb, I think, might have seen himself in terms more like those medical anthropologist and psychologist Arthur Kleinman uses to describe an 'anti-hero', as someone who 'may not change the world but helps make clear to others what needs to change if the world is to be a less unjust and desperate place':

> … anti-heroism legitimates, at the same time, alternative ways of living in the world that offer new and different personal answers to the question of what an adequate life is. Heroic acts that change society are rare and more often than not meretricious fictions, whereas protest and resistance as well as perturbing and disturbing the status quo are, at best, the most ordinary people like us can achieve.[6]

PART 1

ONE

Childhood (1930–45)

THE PORTRAIT ABOVE the station platform was one of the most beautiful he had ever seen – a queen in a tiara, looking down from her regal pose on the relieved faces of all on board the train, including the Feith family from Vienna. It was late March 1939. A journey that started more than a year earlier in their apartment on the Augartenstrasse had led them here to a railway station in Belgium, and in another eight weeks it would end on the other side of the world.

Herb was not yet eight years old when the Nazis stormed Vienna and annexed Austria to the German Third Reich on 12 March 1938. The only child of Jewish parents, both in their late thirties, Herb was raised in a middle-class household just outside the inner ring that circles Vienna's commercial, business and

cultural heart. His family lived in Leopoldstadt, home to many from Vienna's Jewish community, which before the March 1938 Anschluss accounted for approximately twenty per cent of the city's population. At the end of his street was Augarten, a large park, and a short tram ride or walk away was central Vienna. The Feiths' apartment was modest but comfortable and large enough for the small family of three, a grandmother, until her death when Herb was six years old, and servant. It overlooked the contained and concreted Danube River. Rigid banks channelled the river through the city and marked the border between the city's inner and outer rings. In the final stages of the Second World War, this part of the river was the last line of battle between the liberating Russian army and the Nazi Wehrmacht, and the buildings on its banks bore the brunt of artillery exchange. The Feiths' apartment was precisely here, on the border between the first and second districts of the city, in a district where successive waves of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe had settled. Beyond the Augarten were Vienna's renowned park and fairground, Wiener Prater, and the Praterstern, then Vienna's largest railway station. The Russian army targeted infrastructure like the Praterstern as they sought to overrun the Germans in 1945. The Feiths' apartment building situated in this zone was also destroyed.

At weekends Herb went walking with his parents, grandparents and cousins in the mountains and forests outside Vienna. His father accompanied him on foot or by tram to kindergarten and later to school. It was on these trips with his Anglophone father that the foundations for Herb's English language were laid. By all accounts, he had an idyllic early childhood in a loving household. He shared cuddles in his parents' bed on Sunday mornings. His grandmother sewed clothes for his Teddy

bear, and the household put on their own Punch and Judy shows for his birthday parties. Herb enjoyed an extended family of first and second cousins and aunts and uncles. Herb's father, Arthur, was a leather salesman who worked for several factories before he opened his own leathergoods store. Herb's mother, Lily (née Schrötter), was a radiographer's assistant. Both of their families, like most Viennese Jews, were social democrats. The Feith family, originally from Germany and Moravia and ethnically Jewish, was agnostic. Herb's maternal grandmother, Marie, who was from Poland and with whom Herb and his parents lived for a time during his childhood, came from a family of rabbis and kept a kosher household. Arthur and Lily chose not to expose Herb to religion until he could think and feel for himself. Herb said he did not become aware of his Jewishness until the Nazis occupied Vienna.

Herb started to suffer nightmares soon after the Nazis first came to Austria. He remembered that the nightmares were connected to air drops of Nazi propaganda leaflets. After the Anschluss, regulations to restrict the movement and activities of Vienna's Jews were immediately passed. They were banned from parks and were referred to only as 'Israel' or 'Sarah'. His father's store, like all Jewish businesses, would have been requisitioned or Aryanised in spring 1938; it is likely that his mother would have lost her job around this time, too. From March 1938 it was clear that Vienna, and potentially all of Europe, was an increasingly unsafe place for Jews. After the Anschluss the Feith family, together with thousands of other Jews, began their attempt to leave Austria.

Arthur and Lily managed fairly well to shelter Herb from the increasingly difficult realities of day-to-day life in Vienna and the political and social climate that was making it impossible for

Jews to remain there. His parents and their friends were preoccupied with the quest for visas to enable them to get away. Herb would wonder at the hushed conversations among adults in the kitchen, the steady stream of people coming to ask his father for help with their documents and particularly with their English. Herb's father had lived in England before the outbreak of the First World War and was interned there as an enemy alien for its duration. He spoke English fluently, and friends and family frequently called upon him to assist them with letters of application to countries that might offer them asylum. His knowledge of English and England meant that Arthur was able to help his niece Edith, then 16, to escape to England in late 1938 by advertising her services as a domestic maid in London newspapers. Edith was the daughter of Arthur's sister, Rosa, who was killed in a traffic accident when Edith was only four years old and her brother Leo was 14. Although Arthur Feith's English-language proficiency and contacts in England gave him a potential advantage in this frantic search for refuge outside Nazi-occupied Europe, there is no indication that a British sponsor for the family was ever likely. Ironically, Arthur Feith's status as an enemy alien internee during the First World War might have hindered his chances of being offered refuge in the Second.

Living as they were in a largely Jewish neighbourhood, it is unlikely that Herb would have encountered the humiliation, violence and degradation heaped on Jews daily in other parts of the city. Herb testified that he remained largely untouched by his parents' anxieties as they did their best to maintain normal life at home. As he remembered it, 'somehow my parents seemed to have protected me … I didn't have much sense of horror.'[1] In a postcard Arthur wrote while visiting Austria in 1977, he reminds Herb of a visit they made to Lainzer Tiergarten, a nature reserve,

'shortly before emigration'.[2] Rather than being sheltered and protected, Herb recalled that in the weeks before their departure from Vienna he took a walk alone at night through the snow and found propaganda pamphlets dropped by the German forces. That Arthur and Lily would have let Herb out alone, particularly at night, during this time is remarkable and perhaps doubtful. The story reveals, however, that Herb remembered feeling a level of security or, at least, that he had little awareness of the social and political atmosphere and of the fear and expectations of Jews and other Viennese in 1938–39. Herb's memories of his childhood were, not surprisingly, vague. He did, however, have a clear memory of being wrenched from school on the day the city's synagogues were set alight in what became known as Kristallnacht, 9–10 November 1938, a week after his eighth birthday. That evening his mother held him up to the window to watch the city burn and asked him never to forget what he was witnessing. Herb was then moved to a new school with only Jewish students, and he suddenly realised that his life was changing. Days were filled with movement, plans, the assembling of documents, letter-writing and petitioning, packing and posting. Despite the unsettling, dangerous and anxious times after Kristallnacht, Herb's grades at his new school on the Börsegasse in Vienna's central old town matched the high standards he had reached at his previous one.

Months earlier, on 11 July 1938, at the time of the thirty-nation Evian Conference to discuss the problem of Europe's involuntary emigrants, the Feiths lodged their applications for visas with the Australian Embassy in Vienna.[3] Demand for visas from Jews in Vienna was extremely heavy. In the three weeks after Anschluss, the Australian Consul in Vienna received 10 000 visa applications. By April 1938, after a blitz against Jewish businesses, 50 000 Viennese Jews had registered for emigration to foreign

lands. Several members of the Feith and Schrötter families managed to escape to France, including Herb's cousin Leo and his family and Arthur's oldest sister Ida and her daughter Lily. Although Arthur and Lily Feith had lodged their application for admission to Australia in July, they had not found an Australian sponsor to act as their guarantor by the time of Kristallnacht.

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On the Feiths' Application for Admission of Relatives and Friends to Australia, dated 24 November 1938, is the note 'Form 47 sent direct from Vienna to Canberra on 11/7/38', indicating the date they had first lodged an application for a visa to Australia. Ten months later, on 3 April 1939, they were issued the visa by the British Consul in Vienna, and they were finally on their way. The Feiths stopped in Brussels briefly, just long enough for one of Lily's sisters, Lotte, to come from Paris to say goodbye. They all understood that it could be a very long time before they would meet again. The farewells in Vienna before embarking on their journey into exile were overshadowed with a great sense of foreboding. His uncle Ludwig gave Herb a parcel of sausages for the trip, and another relative passed him a more precious talisman, a watch. No one knew what would become of those left behind, and all were very aware of how lucky the family of three was to gain visas for Australia. It was already April 1939; every day the realisation that time was running out – that the door was quickly closing for Jews trying to leave Nazi-occupied Europe – became more acute. It was particularly difficult for families and couples to gain entry to a country that was safe from Europe's dangerous political situation. As Herb once described it, they knew it was very possibly a matter of life and death.

From Brussels they travelled to London, where the family stayed for several days in a Jewish hostel awaiting the departure of their ship, SS *Oronsay*, from Southampton for passage to Australia. Eight-year-old Herb, perhaps for the first time, felt a great sense of loss for what he was leaving and fear for what lay ahead. After washing one morning in the communal bathroom at the hostel, Herb realised that he had removed his newly bequeathed watch and left it behind. When he returned to find it, the watch was gone, presumably stolen. Herb was inconsolable. Although he was never one to be attached to possessions, the watch represented a life and family left behind and the prospect of an unknown future across oceans. Like so many refugees, the Feiths set out from Europe with very few possessions – certificates of marriage, school enrolments, births and graduations and a few photographs. Herb's watch, a gift of great significance for any boy, and its loss, represented so much more at the time of his exile.

The *Oronsay* sailed to Australia via several ports, including Gibraltar, Marseilles, Naples, Port Said, Suez, Aden and Colombo. Passengers could disembark for a short while at each port, which, for a young boy must have been a great adventure. The Feiths were, nevertheless, exasperated by the heat of the Middle East and South Asia and Herb, having heard stories of the ritual dunking of passengers as they crossed the Equator, fretted until they had passed into the Southern Hemisphere without incident. It is likely the Feiths knew some of their fellow passengers aboard the *Oronsay*. They may have met the Jaruslawsky family from Berlin, who were also bound for Melbourne and had the same visa sponsor. Their ship called at Perth and Adelaide before reaching their destination, Melbourne's Station Pier, on 29 May 1939.

Australia and the refugee problem, 1938

Australia's representative at the Evian Conference of 6–13 July 1938, Thomas White, Minister for Trade and Customs, submitted his report to the government shortly after he returned to Australia. Meanwhile, as the Feith family and thousands of others knocked on the door of the Australian and other embassies and consulates in Vienna, the Australian Government did not respond to White's report for several months. On 21 September 1938, when asked about refugees in the House of Representatives, the Minister for the Interior, John McEwen, stalled further: 'The Government has not yet had an opportunity to consider the report submitted by the Minister.'[4]

In May 1938 the Australian Government had fixed its quota of Jewish refugees at 300 per month, with preference to be given to German and Austrian Jews. It also lowered the sum of money refugees (with guarantors) were required to hold from £500 to £50. The Evian Conference in July did nothing to alter the Australian Government's position. Australia and the other nations at the Conference failed to recognise the gravity of the situation of Europe's Jews at that time. It was not until 1 December 1938, after Kristallnacht, that the Australian Government finally announced it would accept a total of 15 000 Jews over a period of three years. However, it was also quick to stress that these admissions would be highly conditional. McEwen told the House of Representatives:

> In arriving at the figure of 15 000 over a period of three years, the Government has been influenced by the necessity that the standards of living should not be disturbed … [it] will approve

> of only the admission of those classes whose entry into Australia will not disturb existing labour conditions … Although the refugee problem is one quite apart from the general question of immigration, in that it deals with the specific question of the amelioration of the conditions of oppressed people, at the same time it is essential that it should be considered in relation to the general question of immigration … [and] should conform to the same principles as those governing the entry of white aliens generally …
>
> Desperate as is the need of many of these unfortunate people, it is not the intention of the Government to issue permits for entry influenced by the necessity of individual cases. On the contrary, it is felt that it will be possible for Australia to play its part amongst the nations of the world, in absorbing its reasonable quota of these people, while at the same time selecting those who will become valuable citizens of Australia, and, we trust, patriots of their new home, without this action disturbing industrial conditions in Australia.[5]

McEwen's repeated statements here and elsewhere that meeting its obligations in terms of the Jewish refugee 'problem' in Europe should cause minimal disruption of economic conditions in Australia were in response to often vitriolic debate in both houses of the Australian Parliament in the preceding months, led by Labor member Senator Armstrong, about the possible threat these refugees posed to the jobs of Australians. Moreover, the concerns expressed in the Parliament, the media and elsewhere in Australia at this time were not restricted to economics but, as one MP put it, with the potential for the 'formation of racial colonies in Australia'.[6]

In late 1938, as the situation became increasingly dire for Jews

in Europe, the Australian Government, which had for months been avoiding it, found itself face to face with the issue when the first Jews began arriving on its shores seeking asylum. Their arrival brought to a head critical debate about immigration and 'white aliens'. In October 1938 several passenger ships from Europe carried German and Austrian Jews who did not possess the appropriate admission visas but intended to seek asylum. The Minister for the Interior issued a directive to shipping companies not to allow passengers without landing permits to disembark at Australian ports, saying that a number of passengers, all of them Jewish, were planning to try to stay in Australia. Civil liberties and religious leaders responded by expressing concerns that such a move could be interpreted overseas as an anti-Semitic policy. Perhaps more powerful than the lobbying of these groups, however, were the testimonies of those arriving from Germany and Austria who brought first-hand accounts of Hitler's tyranny. Newspapers, such as Melbourne's *Argus*, carried reports daily from those on board the arriving ships, including this account of refugees on the Dutch liner *Nieuw Holland* on 11 October 1938:

> Two brothers who were among those without permits said that they owned a timber business in Vienna, which was confiscated when the Germans entered the country. When Hitler came to Vienna storm troopers were given three days to do whatever they liked to the Jews. Jews walking in the streets were accosted by the troopers, if they admitted that they were Jews they were beaten with rubber truncheons. If they attempted to defend themselves the troopers would draw knives and inflict even more serious injuries. Jews found in an amusement park were forced to run and jump obstacles until they were exhausted. Their faces were then blackened with boot polish and they were forced to

lie down in pools of water about the park until they paid a 'fine' of five shillings. Their hair was then cropped and they were released.

One night the brothers, accompanied by their father, aged 63 years, and by their mother, aged 58 years, were walking in the street when a band of troopers accosted them, and after assaulting them arrested the whole family and took them to barracks, where they were subjected to further punishment before being locked in the cells. They were so severely injured that they were unable to eat for three days.

The brothers said they were overjoyed to be in a free land and they were prepared to do anything if they could secure permission to remain.

Another account from a ship arriving in Sydney a few days later, published in the *Argus* on 14 October, read:

The remarkable adventures of a leading Viennese surgeon and his family in their flight from anti-Jewish persecution in Austria was told yesterday by Dr Emil Huth, who is a passenger to Sydney by the liner *Largs Bay*.

Dr Huth, who studied psycho-analysis under Professor Freud, and who is a specialist in heart diseases, was head surgeon at the Heilanstalt Mauer, a large community hospital eight miles from Vienna …

He said the outrages against Jews in Vienna went beyond description. He had seen Jewish women, aged 80 years, being forced by storm troopers to scrub the pavements in Vienna. The troops poured acid into the buckets into which the old women had to dip their hands.

The passengers were finally able to disembark after several days of political and media attention forced the government to withdraw the directive.

The Australian Jewish Welfare Society initially supported the government's policy of giving preference to Jews from Germany and Austria over those from Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe on the basis that they would more easily assimilate into Australian society. In the Senate on 12 October 1938, Labor Senator Armstrong quoted from an article published in the newspaper *Truth*, in which Sir Samuel Cohen, prominent leader of the AJWS, was quoted as saying: 'Australian Jews want to find a place for the few refugee Jews that Australia can absorb; but they want only Jews who can make good Australians, and who will not displace an Australian from work.' To this Armstrong added:

> These people realise that unless the numbers of Jewish migrants are small, and the persons carefully selected, they will eventually become a definite menace to Australia … Australia was fortunate in that in its early days numbers of English, Irish, Scottish and German settlers came here. Their quality is reflected in the high standard of the Australian community to-day. We do not wish to see that standard lowered; therefore, I urge the Government to take steps to prevent the unrestricted immigration of Jews to this country …[7]

When war broke out in early September 1939 and soon after Australia closed its borders, 8000 refugees had arrived in the country, only 5000 of whom were Jews.[8] Herb and his parents were among that 5000.

The community responds

While the Australian Government was dragging its feet in these months after the Evian Conference, groups of concerned Australians mobilised considerable social and political effort in response to the growing humanitarian crisis in Europe. The Victorian International Emergency Refugee Council (VIREC), led by several prominent Victorians, was formed in late 1938 to help bring refugees from Europe to Australia and to help them adapt once they had arrived. The leadership of this group, which included Melbourne's Lord Mayor Sir Arthur William Coles and Professor H. Woodruff from Melbourne University, was, in fact, largely provided by women, including its founding director, who was also secretary of the Victorian branch of the Australian League of Nations Union, Ada Constance Duncan,[9] Jessie Clarke, an early president of the Council, and Jewish feminist and civil activist Julia Rapke. Coming as they did from Melbourne's feminist, educated and activist milieu, these women were also members of Melbourne's Lyceum Club, founded in 1912 for women only. It was within this elite – and in many ways quite radical – circle that the seeds of the plans for the Feiths' journey out of Europe were sown.

Edith Eliza Harrison Moore was a longstanding member of the Lyceum Club and was from solid Melbourne establishment stock. She was daughter of Sir Thomas a'Beckett, Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria and wife of the late Sir William Harrison Moore, professor at Melbourne University's Law School from 1892 until 1927 and author of the definitive *Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia*, first published in 1902. Sir William was Australia's representative at the League of Nations Assembly from 1927 to 1929 and was accompanied to Geneva by Lady Harrison Moore, who regularly attended meetings of the

Assembly. Education, the university, the law and the courts were institutions in which members of her wealthy family played significant roles in Melbourne in the early 1900s. The ties connecting Lady Harrison Moore with this Jewish family of three from Vienna are at first glance as unlikely as they were remarkable and fortuitous.

Early in her young adulthood Lady Harrison Moore embarked upon what became a life's dedication to community service, concerned in particular with the protection, assistance and education of young, single women, wives and mothers. When she married English-born Harrison Moore in 1898, she chose to omit the conventional vow of obedience from her wedding ceremony.[10]

Lady Harrison Moore had, by all accounts, a quite brilliant mind and a sharp wit, which is noted in the history of the Lyceum Club as legendary.[11] In her own reminiscences about the Club she notes the role it played as an organisation not only for 'professional women' but also for those like herself who were the wives of academics – Lady Burnett, Lady Scott and others are given as examples – and might themselves, if born a few decades later, have taken up higher education and a profession. Lady Harrison Moore described the Lyceum's sensibility: 'Because this Club contains such a high percentage of women who have aspired to and succeeded in doing things, we have had the great stimulus and pleasure of contact with them.'[12]

Because of her social conscience, Lady Harrison Moore channelled her talents into voluntary work related to training and education for women, the establishment of Queen Victoria Hospital for Women and to women's suffrage, among other causes. These were local rather than global concerns, but diary notes from her time in Geneva at the League of Nations reveal that she increasingly saw these issues from an international

perspective: 'The help that nations give to each other [is] surely a good thing not attributable to patriotism but to international fellowship. Surely a good thing. The League is saving children in stopping disease …'[13] The Harrison Moores had no children, and when Sir William died in 1935, Lady Harrison Moore was left with several properties, which she oversaw closely and shrewdly. After his death, she continued her charitable work and busy social life around Melbourne, which included the International Club, of which she was vice-president for a period in the mid-1930s. The Club's activities were largely concerned with offering hospitality to visitors from overseas and from outside Victoria and, through this warm welcome, 'to promote that friendship and understanding which is vitally necessary to the peace of the world'.[14] However, by April 1939, the Club's agenda had become far more politically concerned. Its executive established the Company for Emergency Work in connection with the Australian Red Cross Society, the churches and the League of Nations Union, which became the Victorian International Refugee Emergency Committee (VIREC).

Growing concern among her friends and fellow members of the Lyceum and International clubs about European refugees led several of them to organise individually and collectively. By October–November 1938 demands from Jewish asylum-seekers in Europe were overwhelming their Jewish relatives and friends, as well as business contacts in Australia. The requirement of the Australian Government's refugee policy for applicants to have more than £500 or to have a sponsor to guarantee this amount on their behalf limited the number of people any one Jewish family in Melbourne, for example, could realistically assist.

In this context Lady Harrison Moore was approached by Felix Behrend, a customs clerk, and his wife Beatrice (Beccy), in late

1938. Felix and Beccy, together with Felix's siblings, Julian, Oscar, Elsa, Bertha and Clara, had been busily writing and sponsoring visa applications for their relatives and friends in Europe, many of whom were from Vienna. The family were inundated with letters from distant cousins and associates pleading for help to escape Europe. The Behrends were a middle-class family of modest means. As a customs clerk, Felix earned a public servant's wage. His brother Julian was also a civil servant – at that time, the City of Brunswick's Chief Clerk, with an annual salary of £388 – and his declared bank deposit in late 1938 was only £140, with small additional income from rental on a property he owned. Oscar was a dentist, although not much better off financially: the three sisters, all spinsters, were assisted by the extended family in meeting their needs. The Australian Government's requirement for sponsors to act as guarantors meant that, after he had submitted his first three applications, the Department of Immigration issued Felix with a warning against lodging any more. There was no way he could be expected to act as guarantor for so many applicants on such a modest income. Meanwhile the pleading letters from Europe did not cease. Known within his family as a man of good deeds and compassion and as having a wide network of acquaintances, Felix looked for alternatives. It was at this point that he involved his siblings and friends in sponsoring asylum-seekers. He would prepare the documentation for them, requiring only their stated support and accompanying signature.

Felix was the son of Albert Behrend, a cousin of First World War hero Sir John Monash. They were part of a large extended and well-established family in Melbourne's Jewish community. Felix was well known and well liked and had considerable talent for networking and a reputation for doing good. A member of a musical family, Felix was a gifted baritone and was a member of the

Melbourne Choral Society, as well as of various other associations.

In her appointments book against 9 November 1938, Lady Harrison Moore notes a visit from 'Mrs Behrend' and the 'Misses Dacomb'. The former was Beccy Behrend, and the Misses Dacomb were Beatrice and Clara, sisters who ran the Dacomb School of Shorthand in Melbourne's Collins Street. Throughout November, Lady Harrison Moore attended several 'refugee meetings', often at the Dacombs' offices. Lady Harrison Moore signed an Application for Admission for Arthur, Lily and Herbert Feith on 24 November, and in her engagements book on 29 November 1938 she wrote 'Received permit for Mr and Mrs Austria'. The names of Julian and Felix Behrend appear on an earlier Feith family Application for Admission to Australia dated 21 October 1938; however, in this further and approved application dated 24 November 1938, Lady Harrison Moore is noted as their guarantor. In the following months Lady Harrison Moore regularly attended VIREC meetings and receptions to welcome refugees from the *Oronsay* and other ships as they arrived at Station Pier.

Felix Behrend and his siblings sponsored several families between October 1938 and November 1939, including cousins, the Silberer, Tandler and Weiss families from Vienna and the Jaruslawsky family from Berlin. Among those they sponsored were fine silversmiths and jewellers, doctors, academics and merchants. As they had assisted the Feiths, they also assisted others by finding guarantors, such as Lady Harrison Moore, from the wider community.

As Felix Behrend and his family's record of sponsoring European Jews shows, there were many more potential applicants than there were Australians who were prepared to act as guarantors. Records show that tens of thousands of letters from Europe

such as those sent to the Behrend family were received by Australians and the Australian Government through 1938 and 1939. In the Australian Parliament in 1938, the volume and tone of these pleas was noted by more than one Member of Parliament. The Member for Melbourne Ports told the House of Representatives in November 1938, 'Men and women from the St Kilda district come to me night and day and plead with me to urge the Minister to endeavour to get landing permits for their relatives in order to save them from the concentration camps …' For his part, the Minister for the Interior responded,

> I find it difficult, in the exercise of my office, to withstand the requests made day after day on behalf of persons of this refugee class who are not able to comply with the standards we set for white aliens. I have the very sad duty almost every day of having to interview people in my office who, with tears in their eyes, plead for the admittance of relatives at present, perhaps, confined in concentration camps where, my interviewers explained to me, they are enduring a living death.[15]

There is no record of a similar pleading letter from Arthur Feith. Instead it is recounted that the Feiths lived near relatives of the Behrends' extended family, possibly the goldsmith Silberer and his family, who lived on Wasnergasse, bordering the Augarten, not far from the Feiths. However, it remains unclear which of the Behrend relatives in Vienna might have introduced Arthur Feith to Felix Behrend in Melbourne and why Lady Harrison Moore decided to take on their application and only one other. The time between Lady Harrison Moore signing the Feith application and its approval was a lightning-fast five days, no doubt because of Felix Behrend's knowledge of the bureaucratic

processes involved and his by then considerable experience in lodging such applications.

Arthur and Lily

The Feith and Schrötter families were middle-class small business proprietors, professionals, artists, musicians and religious clerics. Herb's father, Arthur Feith, was born in Dresden in 1894. His father and mother were originally from Moravia and moved to Vienna; when they were children Arthur and his siblings moved around a great deal. His childhood was split between Vienna and Brno in what is now the Czech Republic, where his paternal grandmother lived. Arthur was the youngest of four children. His eldest sister, Ida, was thirteen years older than Arthur and was in many ways also a mother figure for him. He had a brother, Zigfried, and another sister, Rosa. Their father was a businessman who frequently travelled in Germany and elsewhere and was often absent from the family home. When he died, he was living and working in Lugano in Switzerland. Arthur was only 13 years old.

As a young boy Arthur was sent to live for a year with his grandmother in Brno in order to improve his studies, although to no avail. A self-confessed poor student, he dropped out of school at 14 and returned to Brno to find a job, where his guardian and paternal uncle found him employment as an apprentice in the office of a textile factory in Moravia. As Arthur recalled in an interview with his grandson David in the mid-1980s, his time in the factory was unhappy and thus short-lived:

> … it was winter, it was heavy snow, we lived in the factory, the factory gave us premises, all the apprentices had quarters in

> the separate part … in the morning we had to take a hatchet to break the snow in the basin we had to wash our faces and then in the early dark hours of the morning about 6 o'clock in the winter we had to tread trudge to the factory … I was only there for three months then I left. You see you were there under strict discipline … Saturday was a workday, like any other workday, but if you wanted to go on the Sunday, if you wanted to leave, you had to get permission from the factory from the managers to leave the town … this sort of thing didn't suit me particularly well. So one day I just walked out and took the train and went to the city of Brno and looked and found myself a job there.[16]

After working in another textile factory in Brno, Arthur returned to Vienna where he took up a job with a leather-goods factory working in sales, accounts and administration. Arthur attended English classes at the Berlitz School in Brno and continued them on his return to Vienna.

In 1913, on the eve of the First World War, Arthur, aged 19, moved to England to improve his English and to find business opportunities. When war broke out in August 1914, he was employed as a German translator and letter-writer at a machinery factory in Sheffield. Although business with Germany promptly ceased, his employer kept him on. However, Austria was also at war with Britain, and Arthur was therefore officially an enemy alien. A few months later, in October, when reporting to the local police, as all enemy aliens were required to do, Arthur received notice that he would be interned. In the months between the outbreak of the war and his internment, Arthur had the opportunity to return to Austria, but he chose not to, as he wished to avoid conscription into the armed forces. He was at first interned

in a camp near Manchester, where he and about 1500 other Germans and Austrians lived for more than a year. They were then moved to an internment camp on the Isle of Man at Knockaloe, a purpose-built camp capable of housing 23 000 of the 30 000 German nationals interned by the United Kingdom during the First World War.

Boredom was often the greatest challenge facing the men interned at Knockaloe and another much smaller camp at Douglas on the Isle of Man. To maintain mental health and thus ward off cabin fever or 'barbed-wire-itis', the inmates formed camp committees and organised various activities and events. These included crafts, such as woodwork, metalwork and bone carving, as well as education programs and musical groups, which gave concerts.

Arthur Feith was himself very much involved in these activities. His knowledge of English kept him in demand as a translator and as a source of news from the outside world for non-English speakers. He would translate the newspapers daily for his fellow inmates and conduct lessons. He was involved in instigating an education program in the camp. Arthur had a sharp mind and a clever way with words. He was a particularly keen follower of the Viennese satirist, poet and performer Karl Kraus, whose magazine *Die Frackel* ('The Torch'), founded in 1899, was a Viennese institution. But Kraus was more than a master of puns; he was also a pacifist and humanitarian who used the power of satire to expose the absurdities of war, most famously in his essay 'In These Great Times' written at the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.[17] In Melbourne, years later, Arthur Feith would recite Kraus at gatherings with their German-speaking friends and, on his trips to Austria after the Second World War, he went to great lengths to find sound recordings of Kraus's many public readings.

Although his activities in the camp kept him busy, the strain of detention with so many others and for such a long time was never far from the surface. As Arthur recalled, '… the living so closely together with people you know for a long period is very trying … you get to know people too well and you get their bad habits and the bad sides of their characters … There was a lot of tension and you see it was a very mixed crowd …'[18]

Arthur was interned on the Isle of Man for three and a half years, making his total period of detention four and a half years, almost the entire length of the war. At the war's end, he and his fellow inmates were promptly deported to Europe. The British Government put them on a ship to the Netherlands and from there they were to make their own way home across war-ravaged Europe with little or no money or supplies. It was a long and difficult journey back to Vienna along a disorganised railway system and through a country where food was scarce.

> [The Germans] gave us a pass that we were permitted to use on any train in the direction to our home destination … but then the rail system was completely disorganised in those days, you travelled for a few stations and then you had to stop and wait for another train … so it took a long time to go right through Germany and to Austria and then we were getting food at the various army depots on the way, very scanty food and very poor quality because Germany, the Germans were really starving in those days, they were in terribly bad condition after the first war …[19]

When he returned to Vienna in 1918, Arthur immediately went back to work for the leather-goods company he had worked in before departing for England. It was not long, however, before he had decided to go into business on his own.

In 1927, at the age of 34, Arthur married Lily Schrötter, three years his junior, an X-ray technician and radiographer's assistant. The newlyweds lived with Lily's mother in her apartment in Leopoldstadt. Like Arthur, Vienna-born Lily Schrötter had also lost her father when she was young and had no recollections of him at all. Her mother, who was of Polish descent, supported Lily and her two sisters on a small pension she received from the railways, for whom her husband had worked as a doctor, supplemented by income from renting rooms to Polish girls who came to Vienna to study. The three sisters, Lily, Lotte and Irma, were encouraged to complete higher education and train for a profession. Lily trained as a nurse before then qualifying as an X-ray technician. In her youth she was seriously injured in a skiing accident that left her with a slight limp, although this did not limit her passion for the favourite national pastime, hiking. It was most probably because of Lily's stronger Jewish affiliation that she and the agnostic Arthur married in a synagogue. The wedding celebrations reflected their modest means – a dinner in a local restaurant. Herbert was born on 3 November 1930 in Vienna, where he lived with his parents and his grandmother, who, with her servant's help, cared for Herb when his parents went out to work.

Settling in: Melbourne, 1939–45

The Feith family always intended Melbourne to be their final port of disembarkation. The only people they had connections with in Australia, but had not met, were the sponsors of their visas, the Behrends and Lady Harrison Moore, and a few distant relatives who were also newly arrived asylum-seekers carrying their own

cash guarantee. Hedwig (Hedy) Gellert, Arthur's much older first cousin from his mother's family, and her daughter, Hanna Unger, and son-in-law had arrived in Melbourne from Vienna in October the previous year without sponsorship but with sufficient cash of their own. On their arrival papers, under 'Family and Friends' in Australia, Arthur listed Hedy Gellert and Felix Behrend. As an indication of just how tentative these connections were, Arthur left the space on the papers for a proposed permanent or temporary address in Melbourne blank. In different handwriting, most probably that of the processing clerk, is written 16 Gurner Street, St Kilda, the address of the small apartment in which Hedy and Hanna lived. The Feiths spent their first nights in Melbourne at this address before moving to a room of their own in a boarding house on Raleigh Street, Malvern.

The Feiths settled into suburban wartime life, enduring the hardships of rationing, poor employment opportunities and boarding-house living quite cheerfully – grateful to be living freely. Although the war years were difficult, they were not as hard as the Feiths' last years in Europe. Arthur and Lily, like so many refugees and immigrants, threw themselves into their work. In September 1939 Lily Feith was one of six Jewish refugee women interviewed for an article in a weekly magazine. In the interview, Lily explained that she had been unable to find work as an X-ray technician in Australia; 'she discovered that her profession could be of little use to her since, in Australia, doctors handle all X-ray treatments, and do not employ technicians as they do in Vienna'.[20] Lily was clearly also enterprising and found a way to apply her skills and her knowledge of radiography to a gap in the beauty market in Australia at that time – the removal of hair using electrolysis. She worked out of a hairdressing salon in Malvern and made house calls. Among her clients was her family's sponsor,

Lady Harrison Moore. This work was, however, temporary and casual, and eventually Lily found a job as a sewing machinist in a uniform factory. By all accounts, Arthur found work more difficult to obtain. In her interview for the women's supplement, Lily mentions that her husband had recently obtained a position, but does not mention what it is. We know that at the end of the war Arthur was working as an assistant buyer at a soap factory.

In their first twelve months in Melbourne, the Feiths moved several times. They moved from the boarding house on Raleigh Street to another in North Caulfield. Herb remembered this period as particularly unhappy, as the family struggled financially. In mid-1940 they made what was to be their final move to a boarding house on Alma Road, Caulfield, where the family were immediately happier. The house was divided into three apartments with a shared bathroom with coin-operated water heater but separate kitchen facilities. Their fellow residents were refugee families like themselves, couples and single women. Although their own quarters were small, the Feiths enjoyed the house, which was surrounded by a large garden with plum and apricot trees. As their financial situation improved over the next decade, Arthur and Lily gradually purchased the whole house and converted it from boarding house to a single dwelling.

Alma Road

Herb attended nearby Caulfield North Primary School. Because Arthur had begun teaching English to Herb when he was just five or six years old – three years before their exile – eight-year-old Herb was already more or less fluent in the language when they arrived in Melbourne. This set him apart immediately from the other immigrant and refugee children. Melbourne's inner

south-eastern suburbs were already home to a large and established Jewish community to which the recently arrived Central European Jews were naturally attracted. Although Herb was initially placed in grade 2, teachers quickly recommended that he skip ahead to grade 4. At the end of the school year in 1940 – his first full year in Australia – Herb was dux of his class.

Although these early months and years were far from easy for the Feiths, there were moments of levity. In her September 1939 interview, only four months after their arrival, Lily was positive about their new home, pointing out the differences between Vienna and Melbourne very diplomatically.

> In Vienna, there are broadcasts of opera every night of the week, and dozens of celebrity concerts. Lectures, too, are very common, and the subjects range from economics to spinning, and it is the young folk who listen to these lectures. Here, they like to go to parties and dances, and everyone, rich or poor, wears evening dress. In Vienna only the upper classes dress for the theatre or parties. I wore evening dress the other night, for the first time in my life!
>
> This is a wonderful country for adults and children alike. The food, the air, the healthy outdoor life, it is all so good. Housekeeping is so much easier. In Vienna everyone lives in huge blocks of old fashioned flats, few of which are equipped with lifts. The housewife, laden with purchases, has to climb perhaps four flights of stairs. There is more scrubbing and polishing and baking to be done than there is here, and not so much entertainment in one's own home. Friends meet, students study and business is transacted in coffee houses. We are especially happy here with our own garden. It is a luxury we thought we should never enjoy![21]

The small family were very close. Arthur and Lily always included Herb in their adult conversations and discussions, encouraging him to read and engage with them. In Vienna he had called his parents by their first names, Arthur and Lily, but in Australia they chose to adopt 'Mum' and 'Dad' instead.

The Feiths lived down the road from the synagogue Temple Beth Israel, which had been established nine years earlier.[22] Since the arrival in 1936 of the German-born and Oxford-educated Rabbi Dr Herman Sanger from Berlin, Temple Beth had become known as Melbourne's first progressive or liberal synagogue. Many of those recently arrived from Europe were attracted to the congregation and to Sanger himself, and it grew greatly in size and influence during the war years.[23] For Lily and for young Herb, Temple Beth provided a ready-made and welcoming community in those early years in Melbourne. The Temple's Dr Sanger, who came from a long line of rabbis, was highly intelligent, charismatic and popular and, for a time, a significant influence on Herb. Herb attended temple with his mother and lessons in preparation for his bar mitzvah. In 1942 he received first prize for his youth group lessons and was promoted to Sunday school teacher. In 1998 at a forum in Yogyakarta, on one of the rare occasions that he talked publicly about his religion, Herb recalled fondly the hymns he had sung with his mother.

Many years later Herb described his mother as becoming 'more Jewish' in Australia, then adding, 'Hitler made her more Jewish.'[24] Both her refugee experience and the discovery of a liberal Jewish and largely Central European community where she found common religious and social values were immensely important. In letters to Herb in Indonesia in the early 1950s, Lily often reported on Rabbi Sanger's sermons and other activities in the community. Not long after his bar mitzvah, Herb stopped

attending Temple, leaving his mother to go on her own. Lily also observed the religious holidays largely alone, the only exception being the ritual feast of Seder marking the beginning of Passover, which Arthur joined her in celebrating each year. Herb later described this move away from being a practising Jew as something like teenage rebellion, although it would prove to be long lasting: 'At the time I was reading various books that turned me into a humanist. I began to think of Judaism as an obstacle. Maybe I was bored, and there was some rebellion, but I called myself a socialist and an internationalist. And I was annoyed with the Jewish insistence that we should only have Jewish girlfriends or boyfriends.'[25]

The Feiths maintained regular contact with their sponsors, Lady Harrison Moore and the Behrend family. In correspondence from Arthur to Herb in 1958, Arthur includes some of a recent letter from Lady Harrison Moore that demonstrates the relaxed nature of their friendship nineteen years after she first encountered them:

> It must be a source of happiness and pride for you to know what a fine part your son is taking in public thought which is generally the nucleus of action. It is a pleasure for me to know it, but of course must be so much more to you and his father who have had the responsibility of bringing him up. I had thought his father seemed sometimes a bit rough with him. I do wish you would not call him Herb which I think is a frightful name whilst Herbert is a fine one.

Then Arthur adds:

> Well, I must agree with her that Herb does not sound nice and it was not us who originated it but your school mates. I

> am afraid that little can be done now that this name is known internationally. As to your father's roughness, well that is for you to judge. At any rate, she speaks her mind and this is what I like about her …[26]

Their community of friends and neighbours included other refugees from Central Europe, particularly Germans and Austrians. After 1942, their guests included many who had been brought to Australia on HMT *Dunera* – Germans, Austrians and Czechs, many of them Jews, who were interned in camps in Tatura in northern Victoria and Hay in southern New South Wales. The *Dunera* boys, as they became known, were enemy aliens deported to Australia from Britain as the war in Europe escalated in 1940. Like Arthur Feith in 1914, they found themselves in Britain at the outbreak of war. In many cases they had fled there as refugees from the Nazis, only to be interned. Among the 2500 men transported to Australia in July 1940 were artists, academics, scientists and musicians. The Feith family came to know many of the *Dunera* men, including several with whom Herb became particularly friendly at university, such as Henry Mayer and Hugo Wolfsohn, both students and later faculty members of the Department of Political Science at the University of Melbourne and other universities. At least once a week the Feiths would host friends, usually at Lily's initiation, although Arthur largely held court at these gatherings, often reciting Kraus poems and speeches for an appreciative audience.

Late in the war Arthur and Lily were joined in Melbourne by Lily's sister Lotte and Arthur's sister Ida, her daughter (also called Lily) and son-in-law Wolf, who was not Jewish, and their daughter, Evie. Lotte settled in Melbourne and taught French; Wolf, however, who had been a lawyer in Vienna, was unable to

find anything other than labouring work in Melbourne and was extremely unhappy. Cousin Lily, an accomplished pianist, was also homesick for Europe, so at the end of the war they chose to return to Vienna. Wolf's father was a prominent member of the Socialist Party and was elected to a role in the new mayoralty of Vienna so they hoped to return to new opportunities. In later years, Arthur often met his sister, Ida, on his frequent trips to Europe. However, after their return to Vienna, Ida never again felt at ease and Lily and Wolf's marriage deteriorated. When Evie reached university age and chose to study in England, Lily and Ida quickly made the decision to go with her, and they left Austria.

The Feiths farewelled other friends and family who had decided to return to Europe after the war. After working with the Allies in post-war Germany, Herb's cousin Edith, daughter of Arthur's deceased sister Rosa, lived briefly in Sydney in the early 1950s before she too returned to Europe.[27] The primary reasons they gave were not hostility or racism because of their refugee status, but rather the lack of cultural sophistication in Australia such as that of Europe and, most of all, a longing for their homeland. Why then did the Feiths choose to stay in Australia and not to return to Austria, as Lily and Wolf had, or to England like Edith? What stopped them from returning, too?

Although Arthur and Lily could at times be critical and uncomfortable in Australian society, and privately expressed their disdain for Australia's tacky aesthetic, they had established networks rapidly, found community and put down roots. Lily and Arthur maintained connections with their fellow Central European refugees, but also established connections more broadly with groups like the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and later the Caulfield Society for Adult Education. Indeed, for

them, unlike their relatives, post-war Austria did not hold the same allure. As Arthur told Herb in 1960:

> I was never able to stomach the false sentimentality 'Gemuetlichkeit' [cosiness, kindness] hidden behind of which I was able to sense the baseness which revealed itself so grossly when the Nazis came to power. No German city's inhabitants went quite as far as the Viennese in 'Fleissaufgaben' (for Betty: something a pupil does without being compelled to do it, just in order to show his diligence to the master, and to curry favour with him) of anti-Jewish brutality, or at any rate, nowhere was there as great a percentage of brutes.[28]

For Arthur, too, there was this: 'I never was a patriotic Austrian and … the Anglo-Saxon world is and always has been more congenial to me …'[2]

TWO

Youth (1945–51)

> I was an immigrant kid, I identified very, very strongly with Australia, but at the same time I identified very strongly with my parents and there was lots of tension in that.
> Herb Feith, 'How Asia changed me'

HERB GREW TO be a sharply intelligent and perceptive boy used to adult company. Conversation with friends, guests and neighbours in the Feith home during the war and immediately after was dominated by talk of Europe and the plight of friends and family and of homes and familiar places, now devastated. Fellow residents and guests coming and going from 77 Alma Road, some of them also refugees, brought news of the fate of their relatives. Although the war was being fought oceans away in Europe, for the Feiths and their fellow refugees in Melbourne it was ever-present in their thoughts and conversations. Herb had a sleep-out

on the front porch of the sprawling and crowded house – a sanctuary of his own. He covered its walls with maps of Europe, charted the progress of the war and listened intently to news bulletins on his radio.

By the end of the war Herb was 15 and settled at Melbourne High School. With the assistance of his parents, the young immigrant had developed the ability to fit fitted into Melbourne life. From his mother, he inherited a warm, friendly and easy rapport with people, and from his father his sharp intellect and acutely analytical approach to politics. In practical terms, the complex transition from the Central European sensibility at home to the multicultural aesthetic and dynamic of his Australian school seemed to be easy for Herb. He worked in a shoe store in the summer, joined the Boy Scouts, went camping and hiking and played tennis. Like so many children of immigrant families, Herb learnt to switch effortlessly between languages, customs and cultures.

After the war, Arthur and Lily, unlike their cousins and many other fellow refugees, made a decisive investment in Australia as their new home. In March 1946 Arthur registered a giftware-importing business, Arthur Feith & Co. Operating from its office and warehouse in Melbourne's Queen Street, the company imported goods from Europe and later also Asia and the United States and sold them to stores in Australia. Lily joined Arthur in the business, but not before a great deal of consideration. His parents had never worked alongside each other before; the family was well aware that Arthur, who was the boss, had a hot temper at times. The working partnership was to bring a new dynamic to their relationship and to the family as a whole. At home they made an effort not to talk about the business. Conversation over the evening meal was about the latest *New Statesman*,

world events, philosophy, literature, film, politics and religion. The family discussed the latest essays and novels by liberal British writers of the time, such as George Orwell, Victor Gollancz and Arthur Koestler, and talked about political figures, like Gandhi and Nehru, as well as his father's favourite satirist and fellow Viennese, Karl Kraus.

The Feiths were hard workers but they also recognised the importance of recreation and holidays. As they had in Austria, on family holidays the Feiths went to the mountains for hiking and fresh air. They often spent the Christmas–New Year break at Mount Buffalo Chalet in the Victorian Alps. Once they had bought a car, they liked to take regular day trips to the Dandenong Ranges to Melbourne's east. Herb's description of the family's activities on their Christmas holiday in 1950 captures their bond:

> Dad's in a very gay mood and we're all having a merry time. There have been plenty of discussions too. Mum and Dad have been reading an extremely interesting work by Martin Buber on Jewish Mysticism and that's been one of our many topics of conversation … Then we've had a few more battles on the old subject of whether morality is prudential and relative or absolute. That's the sort of argument [we'll have] for the rest of our days, and it's pretty doubtful whether we could ever agree … By and large I think we've managed to keep off politics …[1]

Although it was very much a family business by the early 1950s, there was never any suggestion that Herb would join Arthur Feith & Co. His parents devoted an enormous amount of energy and time to building and managing the company. Consequently, Herb knew a great deal about its day-to-day operations, particularly

about its employees, some of whom worked for the Feiths for many years and were considered almost family. In years to come, Lily would provide long and detailed accounts of problems with staff and other company news in letters to her son. He would respond with encouragement, sometimes advice, and always caution his parents against working too hard. In letters to his parents from Indonesia, and later from America, Herb occasionally presented ideas for goods he had come across that might be of interest for the business, sometimes providing costs, prices and other details, but this was the extent of his involvement in the company. As a young boy and teenager, Herb never helped out in his parents' office or warehouse, nor learnt any accounting or clerical duties. Apart from some holiday jobs, Arthur and Lily saw Herb's education and tertiary study as a priority. As Arthur wrote to Lady Harrison Moore in his Christmas letter in December 1945, 'We have not decided on his career, but as he is such an excellent scholar we intend to let him do his [L]eaving before doing anything further.'[2] More than that, though, was the sense of moral obligation they instilled in him. As Herb put it, his parents had plans for him:

> [But] it was also the kind of childhood that led me to feel that a terrible lot was expected of me. Basically I was expected to make the world into a better place. As Betty, my wife, said to me this morning, they hadn't gone to all that trouble just so I could be a successful doctor or a successful lawyer. In other words, I grew up thinking that it was important to learn things and search out the truth but also and really more importantly, it was important to do practical things with the knowledge one got.[3]

Finding soul mates

Herb met Jim Lawler in their first year at Melbourne High School. The 14-year-olds discovered in each other a kindred spirit and a new culture. For Herb, Jim's friendship represented his first point of deep contact with Australian social and cultural life. For Jim, the Feith home was like nothing he had ever come across growing up in an Anglo-Methodist Melbourne family. From the food served at dinner to the magazines and books in the Feith house, everything seemed foreign, stimulating and exciting. For Herb, of course, this was simply normal and, until he met Jim's own family and later that of the woman he would marry, Betty Evans, who both came from middle-class suburban households, he was largely unaware of the difference between his world and theirs.

Through these friendships and experience of their homes Herb learnt about Australia. These encounters were crucial in the exploration of his sense of identity and place as a newcomer in Melbourne. Arthur and Lily supported his friendships and search for his identity as an Australian, choosing to send him to local state schools and being thrilled when he won a place at the selective Melbourne High School. Although most in their own social circle were refugees from Central Europe, Arthur and Lily did not insist that Herb stay within this circle. They understood that migrating to Australia as a child would mean that Herb would probably choose to identify with his new country rather than that of his birth, even though they could never make the same choice.

Although they were deeply grateful for the refuge and opportunities Australia had given them, Arthur and Lily's sensibilities, their culture and nationalist ties with Central Europe, Austria and Vienna occasionally translated into snobbery or disapproval

of Australian social and cultural life and later led to misunderstandings that required Herb to negotiate between his two worlds. Herb's opportunity to visit the homes of his friends and to observe their culture and family life closely enabled him to make a very different assessment of Australians and their way of life from that of his parents. Indeed, it was Herb's friendships and activities that eventually allowed Arthur and Lily to venture outside their social circles.

Significantly, in the homes of his two closest adolescent friends, both Methodist, Christianity was evident in everyday family life. In these homes Herb probably experienced his first close encounter with Christianity, at the time in his life when religion or spirituality was becoming less of an obligation to his mother and was increasingly a subject of deep thought and independent reflection. Herb's withdrawal from practising Judaism soon after his bar mitzvah was clearly difficult for Lily to accept. In a letter to Herb in 1952 in which she recalls the time they shared at Temple very fondly, there is a tangible sense of sadness when she writes, 'On Friday evening a small boy of about 10 years old sat next to me in the temple. I let him look at the book with me. What a lot of memories came back …'[4] Lily did not ask Herb to accompany her once he decided not to. His parents were willing to encourage him to think and act freely and independently, so long as he stayed true to the values and morality they demanded of him.

After the war

> We face a moral crisis graver, perhaps, than the physical crisis of the war. There are two paths for the human race, and it must choose between them. One, that of greed and hatred and self-interest, will end by turning us, with or without the atom

bomb, into something less than human: the other may take us … to heights of splendour – in body mind and spirit …

Gollancz, *Our Threatened Values*, p. 157.

Herb's political education began very early. Even before the family's exile, as a boy growing up in the hostility and turmoil of pre-war Vienna, he could not avoid becoming aware that politics had real impact on people's lives. The experience of the Nazi onslaught and Stalin's communism elicited a fervently anti-totalitarian and anti-communist politic in the social democrat Feith household. The United Nations, and the League of Nations before it, held the promise for refugees of a new world order predicated on internationalism, rather than virulent and hate-filled nationalism, and a system based on universal standards and the will to uphold them.

Despite their criticism of many aspects of the Australian culture, Arthur and Lily approved of the intrinsic egalitarianism of Australian life, and it was this that helped them decide not to return to Europe but to settle in Australia permanently at the war's end. The space allowed for individualism while upholding a sense of communal well-being, reflected in the national tropes of mateship and a fair go, resonated with their social democrat sensibilities. In a letter to Herb in Indonesia, sixteen years after their arrival in Australia, Arthur recounted a conversation he had with an Indonesian he met in Melbourne about Sumatran egalitarianism, he reflects on the Australian character and his own situation:

Sumatrans don't like to be domestic servants and if they are they insist upon being treated as equals. Something to appeal to 'our' Australian egalitarianism. I say 'our' for with this I can identify myself, although I am of the opinion that the

> naturalisation – now conducted with pomp and circumstance – will not make an Australian, as little as a drop of water will make anyone into a Christian.[5]

At Melbourne High, a school with many immigrant pupils – Greeks, Jews, Italians – Herb was by no means unique. He was one of many boys interested in music, literature and charity work, who were highly articulate and yearning to learn. As fellow student Ken Inglis described it, students educated each other at a time when huge questions were in the air. That he didn't play football and cricket might have made him stand out, but Herb was not alone in this and he was under no pressure to play these sports. Herb loved to play tennis and table tennis, and his involvement in many extracurricular activities made him a well-known and well-liked student. There was, however, something about Herb that made him exceptional; something in his eccentricity, his intensity, his 'oddness', as his best friend Jim Lawler put it, made Herb stand out even in his adolescence.

Herb's school life at Melbourne High was busy and rewarding. He played the violin in the school orchestra, which was of a high standard among schools. He was the founding President of the United Nations Club and member of the editorial team of *The Sentinel* magazine in his final year. Jim and Herb shared a love of classical music, bucking the trend among their contemporaries towards the swinging American dance music of the time. Although studious, they both had time enough to read widely outside the syllabus. With Arthur's encouragement they were drawn especially to the writers and socialists Koestler, Gollancz and Orwell. The pair studied Koestler's essay, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, intensely and referred to each other as the yogi (Jim) and the commissar (Herb). Jim was the quiet, deep thinker,

poet and linguist. Herb was the ultimate doer, whose own deep thought inevitably resulted in action of some kind. They were alike in many ways, and their school friends recalled them as seldom being apart.

As fans of George Orwell and his coterie, much in their reading of Orwell and Gollancz resonated with reports they read in the *New Statesman*; both writers were also regular contributors to the magazine. The message was to be mindful of the morality of the Allies' victory, warning that they put at risk the very values they fought to protect in war by their actions in peacetime. Gollancz had written specifically about the treatment of Germans after the war.[6] Reports of the situation in Vienna reached the Feith household through the *New Statesman*, which reported on 14 April 1946: 'No meat, milk, fruit, potatoes or other vegetables for the average consumer. As a result, the political and administrative centre is drained of energy … the young Viennese, most of them unemployed except in the Black Market, are driven into cynicism and contempt for the new Democracy.' These images of an increasingly dire situation in Germany and Austria added to reports they gathered from their own friends and family still in Europe. On 1 February 1947 in more letters published in the *New Statesman*, the situation in Germany was described as 'increasingly desperate':

> … one cannot rely on receiving full rations … we have never received 1500 calories … Many people – widows, refugees and families of war prisoners – cannot afford even to buy their ration of wood. Many children here have no winter coat or even one pair of shoes … The feeling is growing that the German people are now fighting for their very lives against slow extermination and dangerous incompetence …

It is unclear exactly when Herb decided to assemble a pamphlet titled 'Letters from Europe'. Nor is it clear from where these letters originated; however, it is probable they came from family correspondence with loved ones and friends remaining in Europe and from news sources. It is also probable that Herb wrote the pamphlet around the same time he approached the Lutheran War Relief effort about taking up a clothing and food collection in Melbourne for victims of the war in Europe, and Germany in particular. The pamphlet was intended as a testimonial to be handed to prospective donors. Herb's plea was straightforward:

> As in Germany and Austria, so in France, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands: can we in our distant and purposeless lethargy estimate what the common man of Europe, yes if it be only one common man, would feel on receiving an Australian food parcel … You too can save lives …
>
> Is he human who can resist their cry?[7]

Herb collected the food and clothing on his bike, mostly around Melbourne's eastern suburbs, not far from where he lived. It was 1947, his final matriculation year at high school, when he might otherwise have been studying. He sought help with the door-to-door collection from his friends and wide network of acquaintances at school, and from the United Nations Club and his tennis club. A friend from Mac. Robertson Girls' High School, also a member of the United Nations Club, suggested Herb contact a girl called Betty Evans. Betty attended Methodist Ladies' College and was a member of its choir, a very good student and the eldest of four children. Her family were devout Methodists, and the teenage Betty was deeply committed to her religious beliefs.

Like Herb, as her friend well knew, Betty was also known for her involvement in charitable activities. In an afternoon of going from door to door, the pair routinely collected five pounds or so in donations, which Herb then arranged to be sent to relief organisations in Europe.

Herb and Betty formed a strong friendship based on their common values and sense of moral obligation; it could be argued that each of them was mature for their age. Both had considerable responsibilities within their very different families – Betty as the eldest of four children and Herb as the only child of immigrant parents. Indeed, their mutual attraction was linked to the fascination each had for the other's family, culture and religion. Betty thought Herb's pastrami-on-rye sandwiches exotic and Herb viewed Betty's Sunday roast after church similarly.

In the immediate post-war years, Herb's charitable deeds focused on Europe and the war relief effort. However, as chair of the United Nations Interschool committee and as a keen follower of the progress of the United Nations as an international instrument of peace-building, he became preoccupied and intrigued with another crisis of a different nature, although similarly a product of the world war, much closer to home.

Reaching for independence

With the Japanese surrender, Australia's near neighbour rushed to declare its independence as the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1945 and to set about establishing the institutions of government. The Netherlands colonial administration, usurped by the Japanese Occupation during the war, was at the same time intent on resuming its authority over the Indonesian archipelago. The years following the declaration of independence were

marked by conflict among the colonial Netherlands East Indies administration, its allies and the nationalists.

By late October 1945 the fighting between the Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch and their supporting British Indian troops had become increasingly violent and chaotic. On 25 October 1945 British Indian troops arrived in Surabaya to evacuate Dutch internees from prison camps and to disarm remaining Japanese.[8] They were confronted by a large, well-equipped militia force and, despite efforts by the Republican leadership to broker a peace deal and a ceasefire, a large-scale battle ensued. The killing of the commander of the 49th Indian Infantry Brigade, Brigadier Mallaby, on 30 October triggered what is known today as the Battle of Surabaya and is now marked as Indonesia's National Heroes Day (Hari Pahlawan Nasional).[9] On 10 November British forces commenced an assault on the Indonesian Nationalist militia from the air and sea. More than 6000 Indonesians died, fourteen British soldiers were killed, and the city of Surabaya was badly damaged.[10] In the wake of this violence and great losses on the Indonesian side, in mid-November the Republican government led by Sukarno, then based in the Central Java city of Yogyakarta, formed a new cabinet and installed Sutan Sjahrir as Premier and Minister for Foreign Affairs, signalling its intention to seek a diplomatic solution to the escalating conflict.[11]

The conflict in the nearby archipelago was keenly watched from Australia. The Dutch/Indonesian struggle was also played out on the wharves in Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, where protests began on 22 September 1945, when Indonesian crewmen began to leave their Dutch merchant ships. They refused to load the ships with the troops, munitions and personnel that would be put to the task of reoccupying Indonesia. Their Australian counterparts joined the striking Indonesian seamen, and the

Waterside Workers Federation black-banned all Dutch ships in solidarity and amid increasing public support. The Australian Government faced a dilemma in deciding how to respond to the Indonesian seamen's protest. If Australia turned them over to the Dutch, they would most certainly be punished for their political beliefs, yet post-war Australian policy did not allow for the granting of asylum to non-white people.[12] The Australian Government, then led by Ben Chifley, was increasingly concerned about Dutch threats to return the Indonesian political prisoners it had brought to Australia during the Japanese Occupation to their former prison on Boven Digul, in what is now known as West Papua. Their solution was to arrange for the repatriation of the Indonesians on a ship that was not Dutch, with their safe passage negotiated by the Australian Government.

In late October 1945 more than 1400 Indonesians elected to join the first repatriation voyage on board the *Esperance Bay*. The seamen were joined by Indonesian civilians, some former employees of the Netherlands East Indies administration in exile in Australia, and the previously exiled political prisoners from Boven Digul. The *Esperance Bay* and its repatriating passengers arrived off Batavia (Jakarta) on 4 November 1945 and were followed by several more repatriation voyages in the next twelve months. For the Dutch and nationalists alike, the repatriations signalled Australia's recognition of and support for the notion of a separate Indonesian state.

Macmahon Ball's mission

Indonesia's Proclamation of Independence coincided with Australia's renewal of its own nationalist program. Chifley's post-war government, with H.V. Evatt as Minister for External Affairs, was embarking on an emancipatory and progressive platform. Australia's

geopolitical and security interests were increasingly being defined differently from those of Britain, and in its foreign policy Australia sought to assert its greater independence from the Empire.[13] Australia was eager to quickly grasp the situation in the Netherlands East Indies, and especially keen to learn more about the republic's newly installed leadership. Shortly after the first repatriation voyage Evatt commissioned William Macmahon Ball, academic, war-time Controller of Shortwave Broadcasting (later Radio Australia), and adviser to the Australian delegation to the San Francisco conference that preceded the establishment of the United Nations, to be Australian emissary to the Netherlands East Indies.[14]

In November and December 1945, Ball was Australia's first official representative following the Proklamasi to visit Jakarta. Ball's brief was to provide cabinet with his first-hand assessment of the situation and, in particular, to gain a sense of the strength of the independence movement.[15] Ball's brief also anticipated the possibility for Australia to act as a mediator to settle the conflict with the Dutch through the United Nations. Ball was coolly received by the Dutch authorities, but warmly welcomed by the Republican leadership. He established a good rapport with Republican cabinet members, including Sukarno, Hatta, Amir Sjarifuddin and Sjahrir, with whom he was particularly impressed. His overall assessment of the Indonesian leadership group was fundamentally supportive. From Indonesia Ball cabled the Department of External Affairs indicating his support for Sukarno's appeal for a UN inquiry into the situation in the Netherlands East Indies and recommending that Australia assist Sukarno in his appeal. He believed it was essential for the situation there to be stabilised in the interests of regional security.[16] His report to the Department of External Affairs, submitted on his return to Australia in mid-December, was, however, largely ignored.

Australia, Indonesia and the UN

Australia commenced a two-year term as a member of the Inaugural UN Security Council in January 1946. H.V. Evatt, a member of the San Francisco Conference, led the Australian delegation to the UN in 1946, 1947 and 1948. In February 1946 the Ukrainian delegation raised the Indonesia Question in the Security Council and called for a UN Commission of Inquiry to be established. In spite of Macmahon Ball's earlier recommendations that Australia back a UN role, Australia did not support the motion, invoking Article 2(7) of the UN Charter relating to domestic jurisdiction[17] to argue that internal negotiations needed to be given an opportunity to succeed.

A self-mediated settlement on the Indonesia question was not, however, something that looked likely even then. Indeed, formal negotiations between the Dutch and the republic did not begin until April 1946, and it was not until 2 November that the two sides initialled the so-called Linggajati Agreement and not until 25 May 1947 that it was finally signed. The Agreement provided for an independent federal Republic of Indonesia consisting of three *negara* (states).

Australia, as an observer, was satisfied and relieved by the outcome of the Linggajati negotiations and, under its terms, recognised the de facto authority of the Indonesian Republic over Java, Sumatra and Madura on 9 July 1947. Less than two months later, however, the Dutch launched major offensives against the republic in all three *negara* in what they claimed to be a police action. They captured some Republican-held territories in Sumatra and Java, thus ending the Linggajati Agreement. With the growing unease at the UN and in the region, Australia was finally forced to shift its position from that of onlooker to that of active participant in the search for resolution.

Several groups in Australia were outraged at the Dutch offensive. By 22 July 1947 the powerful Waterside Workers Federation had imposed a black ban on Dutch ships, as they had in September 1945. The ban was quickly endorsed by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), which declared that no Dutch ships would be loaded at Australian ports and that their departure would be made difficult because no Australian pilot would guide them out of any harbour.[18] The protest spread, with church leaders in Tasmania joining the call on the Australian Government to support UN intervention in the Indonesian conflict. Conservative elements in Australian politics and society expressed their concern that, as the *Argus* put it on 25 July, 'Australian foreign policy should not be made on the waterfront', or, stated more plainly perhaps, 'by the demands of the communist trade unions'.[19]

Meanwhile in suburban Melbourne, 16-year-old Herb Feith and his fellow representatives in the United Nations Interschool Committee were also increasingly concerned about the rapidly deteriorating situation in the nearby fledgling Republic of Indonesia. Herb and his fellow members joined the growing protest, telegramming Prime Minister Chifley to urge Australia's action in pursuit of a resolution to the conflict.

The Australian Government's response was swift; as the Waterside Workers launched their strike on 22 July 1947, the Australian High Commissioner in London approached the British Foreign Secretary to encourage a joint effort at the UN, but Britain's status as a colonial power restricted its capacity and willingness to respond to Australia's invitation. As the Dutch offensive gathered momentum, the Indonesian Republican leadership asked Chifley to act as mediator in the hopes that the Dutch would also accept Australia in such a role.[20] On 26 July a protest in front of the Dutch consulate in Sydney escalated to a riot as the protesters

clashed with police and consulate staff. Two days later the Australian Government still insisted that it was unlikely that it would refer the dispute to the UN Security Council without Britain's cooperation. Meanwhile in Brisbane the Central Committee for Indonesian Independence (CENKIM), established by Indonesian political exiles, was adding strength to the protest.

Not surprisingly, the Dutch were increasingly concerned by the more general support for Indonesian independence in Australia. The Dutch ambassador informed the Secretary of External Affairs, John Burton that an Australian prostitute was inciting Indonesians in Brisbane to protest. Burton promptly went to Brisbane and met CENKIM founding member and former Boven Digul prisoner Bondan and his Australian wife, Molly. Molly Bondan later recalled that Burton was persuaded by their position and immediately agreed to assist them to travel to Indonesia where they would join its revolutionary government.[21] The Bondans and their six-week-old son Alit were flown to Surabaya on a Royal Australian Air Force aircraft in November 1947; their ultimate destination was Yogyakarta, where they both took up positions in the Republican Government.

By 31 July 1947 Chifley had agreed that Australia would act without Britain's backing and referred the conflict in Indonesia to the Security Council. Using its position as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and respected UN participant, Australia, supported by Russia, invoked an untested provision of the UN Charter and proposed that the conflict was a breach of peace under Article 39.[22] The United States pushed for a significantly amended version of the Australian proposal, which was accepted by the Security Council on 1 August, although Britain, France and Belgium abstained from voting. A ceasefire, the first of its kind proposed by the UN, was accepted by the Dutch and

the Republican sides and came into effect on 4 August 1947.

With the acceptance of the ceasefire, the Security Council established a Good Offices Committee (GOC) to which the Indonesian Republicans appointed Australia, and Belgium and the United States were also members.[23] The GOC's brief was to bring the two parties together to broker a peaceful end to the conflict. In this tense atmosphere, the GOC facilitated long and difficult negotiations that eventually led to the signing of the Renville Agreement on 17 January 1948 aboard USS *Renville*, anchored in Jakarta Bay.

Australia's role in bringing the Dutch and Republicans to the negotiating table to thrash out the terms of the Renville Agreement demonstrated its will to forge new and independent foreign policy. Decolonisation and the formation of new states in the Asia–Pacific region and internationally and the creation of the United Nations were major preoccupations for Australian leaders and for the community. In terms of its foreign relations, the United Kingdom–Australia relationship and Australia's approach to Asia and the international community were at a crossroads. During the Pacific War Australia recognised the limits to which it could rely on Britain for its security interests. After the war the nation shifted towards greater autonomy in formulating and enacting its view of the world and, in particular, towards the region in which it sits, while at the same time remaining deeply anxious and fearful of it.

University

When it came to making plans for university, it seemed natural that Herb and Jim would make decisions together. Together they enrolled at Melbourne University in Arts degree programs – Jim to major in French and Herb in Political Science – and applied

for and were awarded scholarships to reside in the Methodist Queen's College. Ken Inglis, who was in the year ahead of Herb and Jim at Melbourne High, had entered Queen's the year before. They both admired Ken greatly and so had followed his choice of college. Lily Feith took Herb and Jim to a tailor for their first suits, which were in the same style and fabric. They were an odd couple, with Jim and his lanky frame towering somewhat over Herb. The friends shared a room at Queen's for the three years of their undergraduate study, 1948–50. In a letter to Herb a few years later, Betty described the dynamic of this friendship: 'Whenever the cricket is on the air I think of him [Jim] as he was at Queen's, lean and long and leggy, looking over the wireless set, his books shut on the table, and smiling in his gentle deprecating way at your [Herb's] bursts of activity for Helping Something.'[24]

For Herb and Jim, both city boys, the decision to live in college was a deliberate quest for independence from their families. The tensions between his parents' sense of identity and his own search meant that Herb needed the space that living away from home could bring him. Although Arthur and Lily had reservations about his leaving, leading to what Herb described as 'a difficult parting', the separation was in the end an amicable one, and Herb still returned home with his laundry to his mother at weekends.

For the young adult Herb, questions of identity and religion were ones of considerable individual exploration and in some ways also experimentation. Herb's closeness to Betty Evans and increasingly to his other Christian friends at university was initially more an intellectual engagement rather than a spiritual one. The Bible study sessions that he, Jim and their friend Vern Bailey held on Saturday mornings at Queen's involved long existential discussions. The exercise was a highly intellectual pursuit of understanding the Bible as one would a Marxist or any other ideological text.

In the post-war years Melbourne University was a vibrant place of competing ideologies, represented by clubs and associations, mostly dominated by the Left. Returned servicemen brought their wartime experience and maturity and, in demographic terms, bolstered the student population. One of the most active and largest groups on campus, the Student Christian Movement (SCM), was attracting brilliant, morally driven minds intent on finding a way to use their intellect for good. They included many men and women from among Herb's existing network at Queen's and from Melbourne High, including Ken Inglis and Max Corden. SCM study groups encouraged wider reading and deep thought – 'a university within a university, which was not a university', as one 'SCMer' later described it. It took the idea that a university comprised a community of scholars, including staff and students, and 'At the SCM you could test everything'.[25] Many of its members were also active elsewhere in the university, in the Student Representative Council (SRC), as editors of publications, members of political parties and non-government groups. In the post-war years Melbourne University was a place for new hopes and ideas and a sense that a better world was possible. Like many others, those attracted to the SCM, including Betty and Herb, were sure they would play a part in bringing about such a world.

Discovering Indonesia from Australia (1947–51)

Less than a year after signing the Renville Agreement, the Dutch launched a second police action in late December 1948, right under the noses of GOC delegates. In the days before the action, negotiations facilitated by the GOC had reached crisis point. The Netherlands was unwavering in its demands that the Republic

be incorporated into the projected federal system on an equal footing with the fifteen Dutch-sponsored and controlled states. The Republicans, who controlled an area where 40 per cent of the population lived, refused to submit to such an abdication of their power.[26] The Dutch employed land, sea and air forces, and this time included in their targeted locations the Republican capital, Yogyakarta. They captured and imprisoned leaders of the Republic, including Sukarno, Hatta and Sjahrir, and took over the capital. This time, however, the Republic counter-attacked, regaining their leadership and control of Yogyakarta in early July 1949.

In the decolonising Asian region there was particular outrage at the Dutch actions. Frustration with the failure of the UN-sponsored peace deals brokered so far also began to build more widely. Disappointed by the Security Council's response to the ongoing conflict in Indonesia,[27] India convened a ministerial conference of governments in the Asia–Pacific region in New Delhi in early January 1949 to work towards a solution. Evatt, concerned that Australia could be sidelined from its prominent role in earlier negotiations, eventually agreed to send a delegate to New Delhi. As President of the UN General Assembly at the time, Evatt refused to go and sent John Burton, the Secretary of his department and one of the key architects of a more regionally focused foreign policy. Burton soon assumed an active role in the conference, telling the gathering:

> We have only one objective at the Conference and that is … to find a way in which peace can be restored in Indonesia, a peace which is just and which, therefore, can be lasting; to endeavour to remedy the damage already done to the prestige and standing of the United Nations and the Security Council without which we have no security.[28]

He was appointed to a committee that developed from the conference resolutions a recommendation on the Indonesia issue to the UN Security Council, urging that steps be taken towards transfer of sovereignty to a United States of Indonesia by 1 January 1950, after elections no later than October 1949.

On 28 January 1949 a UN resolution was passed and the Security Council established the Committee for Indonesia to assist the two sides to realise the resolution.[29] Talks in The Hague in August 1949 eventually resulted in the transfer on 27 December 1949 of sovereignty from the Dutch to the Indonesian Republican government over all disputed territory except the province of New Guinea.

Fears, regional realities, White Australia and aid: 1945–50

In the post-war years Australia's foreign policy approach to the region remained uncertain and in many ways conflicted. There was public support for assisting the Indonesian independence struggle at the United Nations and the Australian Government was mindful of a need to maintain good relations with its neighbours, but fear of the spread of communism lay beneath Australia's foreign policy: 'the Rising Sun was being replaced by the Hammer and Sickle as Australia's greatest security fear'.[30] Australia's initiatives at the United Nations on the Indonesia question in 1947 had been motivated as much by the desire to enhance its own international profile as by any concern for the Indonesian republic or Australian public sentiment. As John Burton later recounted:

> India advised us that they intended to refer the conflict to the Security Council. White Australia had not yet accepted

> the emerging Southeast Asia. It was difficult for Australians to accept the right of local independence, still less the right of Commonwealth members, such as India, to declare an independent status. I realised that it would be difficult for us to support India when the issue came before us in the Security Council. So we took a very dishonest step. We asked India to give us time to consider, and then under another section of the Charter referred the matter to the Security Council.[31]

Incompatibilities between Australia's foreign and domestic policies made for contradictions and paradoxes. From December 1947 to May 1948, the contradictions within Australia's position were played out nationally and internationally when, in accordance with the White Australia Policy, it sought to repatriate twenty-one Malayan seamen to whom it had granted temporary refuge in Australia after they fled the Japanese invasion – just a few of the 6000 non-European refugees to whom Australia had granted temporary asylum during the war on condition that they be voluntarily repatriated at its end. When the Malayan men refused to leave, wishing instead to remain with their Australian wives or girlfriends and children, the story was widely reported, and when nineteen of them were eventually deported in May 1948 there were scenes of high emotion at home and international condemnation of Australia's action. A few weeks later, Evatt again sent William Macmahon Ball as a 'goodwill ambassador of Southeast Asia'; this, his second mission, was to assess the aid needs of Southeast Asian governments.

Ball visited eleven cities in five weeks, extending his visit in the Indonesian archipelago to allow him time to meet again with both Dutch and Republican representatives. His assignment was to put forward Australia's emphasis on providing assistance for

development of, and forming firm relations with, the countries in the region.[32] With the exception of Indonesia, where he experienced a 'very warm, cordial atmosphere',[33] Ball 'encountered public criticism and angry demonstrations wherever he went',[34] especially in Kuala Lumpur where, against Evatt's directions, he held a press conference. Ball expressed his personal opinion that 'owing to Australia's new sense of her place in the Pacific, a change in Australian public opinion towards an immigration policy was likely during the coming decades'.[35] Evatt was forced to publicly reaffirm Australia's commitment to the policy and severely reprimanded Ball in private, warning him against diverging from his mission. Ball, together with Stuart, First Secretary at the Australian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, and others who saw the White Australia Policy as out of date and detrimental to relations in Southeast Asia were, however, fighting an uphill battle.

Despite the difficulties of his trip, in his report to Prime Minister Chifley upon his return, Macmahon Ball drew clear and emphatic conclusions about Australia's role in the region. He highlighted the strength of nationalist sentiment and political independence in the region, which he argued Australia needed to work with and not against: 'Goodwill towards these people must become a national habit, built on respect for the racial sensibilities and national aims of our neighbours.'[36] Although this understanding prevailed in many sections of the government, particularly in the Department of External Affairs, the reality was that Australian politics was as far as ever from rescinding its commitment to a White Australia.

Following the deportation of the Malayans, the case of another asylum claimant captured the nation's attention. Anne O'Keefe was an Indonesian-born woman with six children who was married to an Australian. As they had done with the Malayan

seamen, the Australian Government sought to repatriate her to Indonesia. There was strong and vocal opposition from a number of religious bodies and from the media to the government's policy and deportation order on Mrs O'Keefe. In a landmark judgement, the High Court ordered that Mrs O'Keefe be granted permanent residence, and so too all war-time evacuees. The ruling sparked panic in cabinet; as Minister for Immigration Arthur Calwell exclaimed, the court's decision and the precedent it established constituted 'a development never foreseen or even contemplated' by the government.[37] Public emotion about the O'Keefe ruling remained such that, following Robert Menzies' election victory on 19 December 1949, the deportation order against Anne O'Keefe was withdrawn and fourteen of the Malayan seamen were allowed to return to Australia. Nevertheless, the new government made no substantial changes to immigration law.

During this period the Departments of External Affairs and Defence were also working towards revising policy for Australia's relations with Asia in general and Southeast Asia in particular. Their recommendations proposed encouraging and supporting the work of international agencies in Southeast Asia and direct assistance from the United States to the region, together with Australia's own far-reaching direct assistance with relief and reconstruction in the form of basic medical and clothing supplies and extending to credit facilities, civil aviation, shipping, information services and technical training. Macmahon Ball's 1948 goodwill tour of the region formed the basis for these recommendations about technical and other assistance that Australia might offer.

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In early January 1950 British Commonwealth foreign ministers, including Australia's minister Percy Spender, met in Colombo, Ceylon (later Sri Lanka) to discuss, among other matters of regional and world politics, the possibility of providing economic and technical assistance to assist developing economies in the region. In keeping with its established policy direction, Australia pledged to contribute towards the provision of supplies such as wheat, transportation and communications equipment and, most importantly, scholarships for Asian students to undertake technical training in Australia. The Colombo Plan, as it quickly became known, formed a central plank in Australian foreign policy on the Asian region in the 1950s.

As well as hoping that the Colombo Plan might form a buffer against communist and other potential aggressors in the region – as Spender described it 'difficulty, danger and unpredictability in international affairs of the region'[38] – the Australian Government also hoped that the Colombo Plan's message of goodwill towards its neighbours would obscure the altogether racist underpinnings of its White Australia Policy. As Tavan puts it:

> Nowhere was the limited nature of Australia's engagement with Asia more manifest than in the government's handling of White Australia … [There was] no attempt to deal openly and honestly with the concerns of Asians … Programs like the Colombo Plan , it was hoped, would ease pressure on the policy by way of confirming Australia's goodwill … Immigration Minister Alexander Downer admitted in 1958 that reconciliation between Australian foreign policy and the White Australia Policy was relying very heavily on the Colombo Plan.[39]

Connecting the dots

Herb's first year as an undergraduate at the University of Melbourne was filled with the stuff of freshmen everywhere: the distractions of student life – girls, clubs, social and intellectual events – on top of the demands of an entirely new learning and living environment. Although he majored in political science, Herb experimented with his subject choices, and he included history, economics and German in his first degree. His first-class honours in politics, in which he won an exhibition prize in the subject Theory of Democracy, British and Australian Political Systems, a second-class honours, division 1 (H2A) in history and pass grades in economics and German, show that his serious interests were already clearly determined. As he had at school, he played in the Queen's College orchestra and was well known and liked around the place for his eccentricities and enormous appetite. More and more of his friends were SCM members, with whom he shared deeply intellectual and political discussion mostly related to the state of the world.

Herb also continued his war relief activities and led the World Student Relief appeal in 1948 and 1949. He rallied his friends and fellow students to assist him, first with letter drops around Melbourne's eastern suburbs inviting people to put bags of clothing at their gates on Saturday, then with the collection itself, arranging to meet somewhere central before they paired off to collect the donations. The group then routinely assembled at the Feith home in Caulfield where Lily provided what many of the volunteers appreciated as an exotic European meal.

Towards the end of 1948 Herb and Jim were focused on their final exams and on their plans for a working holiday at a Victorian beach resort. When part-time diplomat and academic William Macmahon Ball came to address the students of Queen's College

late in the final semester, there is little to indicate that Indonesia or, indeed, Asia were in Herb's thoughts and plans for his future. Ball spoke of his recent goodwill mission to Southeast Asia. A report on the lecture in the college's annual magazine *Wyvern* pointed to its impact on his audience: 'In bringing home to us our responsibilities by way of friendship to Asian residents here, our ability to help the rising nationalist movements by providing them with technical and administrative skills and contact with the outside world, and the general desire among eastern countries for independence, he made for us a fitting end to the year's activities.'[40]

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Ball was appointed to the inaugural Chair in Political Science at the University of Melbourne at the start of 1949. He had observed and experienced at first hand the dynamic of decolonisation and post-war reconfiguration in Southeast Asia and Japan and the continuing tussle in Australian politics about its policy towards Asia. Herb took Ball's subject Nationalism and Communism that year, which focused particularly on Asia. Macmahon Ball was an exciting figure to an undergraduate political science student. It was rare to have a lecturer so recently returned from the region that he was talking about, and Herb and his fellow students were no doubt affected by Ball's evocative use of anecdote and imagery in his lectures, typically guided by little more than notes scrawled on the back of an envelope, and by his humanitarian tone. Jack Gregory, who worked as a teaching assistant for Ball in 1949, described the professor as 'relaxed, somewhat unpredictable and irreverent but always liberal-minded'.[41]

Although he had followed the Pacific War, Herb had up to this point focused his political and humanitarian interest on

Europe because of the tangible, human ties he had with Europe and its people. Ball's lectures, given as they were in the wider context of excitement at the time about Australia's position *vis-à-vis* an independent Indonesia, brought Asia, and Southeast Asia in particular, squarely into Herb's view. They kindled his existing interest in newly independent Indonesia. As he studied Indonesia more closely and listened to Ball's anecdotes about his visits there, Herb became attracted to the charismatic and intelligent Indonesian leadership group and to a political system in its infancy, which had the promise of a model for democracy in the decolonising Asian countries. All that was lacking was Herb's own personal and human insight into this particular people and place.

Because of their mutual respect and interest in the region, the relationship between the student and the professor grew. By the end of 1950, aided by his first-class honours grade for politics, Herb had persuaded Macmahon Ball to support his application for a travel scholarship to cover a passage to Indonesia.

Douglas Wilkie and Molly Bondan

In the late 1940s Indonesia featured in the Australian media largely because of its struggle against the Dutch, which was reported from desks in Sydney and Melbourne and not from Yogyakarta or Jakarta. As Peter Hastings, journalist and Southeast Asia correspondent for Australian newspapers in the 1960s, commented: 'Indonesia did not attract special correspondents trying to drive home its present or future importance for Australians.'[42] In this context in March 1950, an unusual series of articles appeared in Melbourne's *Sun* newspaper by its senior foreign affairs columnist Douglas Wilkie written on assignment in Indonesia in lieu of his daily column on world affairs. Wilkie

visited Jakarta and Yogyakarta and met and interviewed members of government, civil service and the population at large. The assignment and subsequent series of five articles were unusual in Australian journalism at the time because of their focus and prominence. As Hastings recalled of the attitudes in the Australian media at the time, Sir Frank Packer, media baron and owner of Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*, typically replied to proposals for visits to Southeast Asia around this time with the retort, '"Nothing in it" and "Who wants to read about it?"'[43]

Although full of invective and clichés, Wilkie's articles in the *Sun* provided a sense of the place and peoples he encountered on his travels in Indonesia. He was overwhelmingly positive about those he met: 'I found nothing but smiles and hospitality in this gracious land …' Although Wilkie explained that the articles came from a desire to talk to ordinary Indonesians and to gain an impression of their lives and hopes, the second in the series – wonderfully titled 'Food (Plates of it – nothing less than 12 different dishes) for thought in Jakarta' – evoked the goings-on among the cocktail set in the capital: 'In Jakarta one eats bigger meals and hears wilder rumours than anywhere else in the world.' 'Even their cities are confused' was an instructive abbreviated outline of the recent history and political present of Australia's now independent near neighbour, in spite of its jingoistic expression and wide generalisation: 'In east Java there are Communist-led bands fighting a guerrilla war against all and sundry. In west Java the Moslem fanatics are running amok, mainly in areas which were always restless even under Dutch rule before the war …'[44] Another article on Yogyakarta, the home of the Republican government during the revolutionary struggle, describes his meetings with members of the government and civil service, whom he depicts as youthful, hopeful and naïve.

It is doubtful that the *Sun* (a popular tabloid) was the daily newspaper read in the Feith household or by Herb's fellow students at Queen's College, who would have been more likely to read the broadsheets *The Argus* or *The Age*. Yet somehow Wilkie's columns reached Herb, and he was captivated by the evocative imagery of Indonesia they presented. With his interest already established through Macmahon Ball's lectures and his own early following of the struggle for independence against the Dutch, Herb was eager to hear at first hand from Wilkie about his rare (for an Australian at that time) experience of Indonesia and to ask about how he might learn more. Herb arranged a meeting with the journalist some time in early 1950.

Douglas Wilkie was amused by the energetic and obviously very bright young man bouncing around in front of his desk who had introduced himself as one of Macmahon Ball's students. He had found much to like about Indonesia during his four weeks there and was happy to talk with the university student about it. In the course of their conversation, it was Wilkie's observations about the civil service and fledgling government of the new nation that struck Herb most. The journalist told Herb about an Australian woman married to an Indonesian man who was a member of the government and a civil servant. Herb was fascinated. He saw an opportunity to make an even closer connection with this increasingly intriguing nation. Since Molly Bondan and her husband had arrived in Indonesia in November 1947, with the assistance of the Australian Department of External Affairs, both had taken up important positions in the Republican government, first in Yogyakarta and, after the transfer of sovereignty in late 1949, in Jakarta. As a consequence of her work in assisting Indonesian political exiles in Australia, Molly was already well known in Australian newspaper circles and, as Wilkie had

found, provided a useful point of first contact for an Australian in Indonesia.

Using an introduction from Wilkie, Herb began to correspond with Molly. His aim was to learn more about the needs of the new democratic government, which, as Wilkie had described it, was desperately lacking educated people to fill the void left by the Dutch. When Herb began corresponding with Molly in 1950, she was initially sceptical of his plans. As he later recalled, 'Molly wrote very vivid letters and Bet got very interested in that correspondence and so did my parents and Molly clearly was interested in testing me out, she wasn't at all sure that she wanted to help me initially, or wanted to help me to get there …'[45] However, they soon developed a good rapport through their correspondence, and by late 1950 Herb had become convinced, and had persuaded Molly too, of the merits of working in Indonesia as a volunteer in some – indeed, any – job after his graduation. He was, he later admitted, also a little intimidated by his seemingly formidable correspondent: 'But I was apprehensive too. Having been taught to associate militant nationalism with Hitlerism, I was apprehensive about the intensity of her commitment to Indonesian nationalism and the Indonesian revolution.'[46]

World Student Conference

In August 1950, coinciding with Herb's early correspondence with Molly Bondan, two Melbourne University students returned from a meeting of the International Student Service Conference in Bombay. At the conference Melbourne's delegates, John Bayly, a fellow resident at Queen's, and Alan Hunt, had met Indonesian students, who gave them a special message to take home. Bayly later recalled this conversation:

> Once, over a cup of tea or at a street corner (I forget just where), an Indonesian delegate spoke to us of the value that could accrue if technical experts in underdeveloped lands were able to enter into the whole life of the society in which they worked, not merely contributing their knowledge but committing themselves to the solution of problems with which they had become identified. This could be self-help at its best.[47]

The call from Indonesian students for assistance in providing their nation with skilled workers, particularly in the bureaucracy and the professions to fill the void left by the departing Dutch, echoed what Herb knew from Molly Bondan and struck a chord with him and Betty and with his fellow students. It was precisely the catalyst needed to translate Herb's correspondence with Molly and his growing interest in Indonesia into action. What is more, Bayly, Hunt and fellow students from the SCM, in particular, were equally enthusiastic about the possibilities. Betty described the excitement and rush of planning that followed:

> This concept of equality and sharing; that of sharing work skills and work experience on the same rates of pay as local Indonesian government servants, became the basis of the Scheme. Right from this first beginning, this concept was seen quite deliberately and self-consciously as a 'New Direction' for a relationship between Australians and people of Non-Western societies who had recently won independence.[48]

Setting on the path

Herb, Betty, John Bayly, Alan Hunt and fellow Queen's College resident and SCM member, Vern Bailey, formed a committee

under the auspices of the National Union of Australian University Students (NUAUS) to investigate the possibility of answering this call. For Herb, this was the beginning of the confluence of his interests, which 'gave me a new sense of excitement about the Molly Bondan possibility, because I thought well maybe if I go up I can help other people go up'.[49]

At Betty's suggestion, as a first step she and Herb approached Frank Engel, a Presbyterian minister and then General Secretary of the Australian SCM National Office, with their idea. Engel was extremely supportive of the ideas behind such a scheme and sought to encourage Betty, Herb and the others. However, he also believed strongly that he or the SCM should not own the scheme and that it should not be seen as a faith-based movement, but rather as a strictly secular endeavour. Engel later described the atmosphere among his constituency at the time as fertile for such an idea: '… there was a body of people in Australia who supported overseas missions and were ready to support a new secular overseas programme – at a new stage in world history'.[50] Engel advised the committee to present their ideas at the national conferences of the NUAUS and the SCM in December and January to gauge what support it may have among new graduates. The committee also decided that it would be advantageous to have someone in Indonesia as quickly as possible. Herb was already well on the way to facilitating such an arrangement through his increasingly encouraging correspondence with Molly Bondan and the invaluable support and advice of his professor, Macmahon Ball.

Macmahon Ball supplemented Frank Engel's advice and support by providing practical advice about whom the committee members should contact in Australian and Indonesian political circles and from whom they should seek permission and assistance. Most importantly, he offered his personal connections

as an entrée to these circles. He wrote to the committee in December 1950:

> The important thing, though, as you suggest, is to get the eager cooperation of the Indonesian government. Otherwise it would not be possible to do anything. The first step is to discuss this with the Indonesian Ambassador … An old friend of mine, John Hood, is Australian Ambassador in Jakarta. You might like to write to him, asking his advice. If you do, mention my name. Again, the Australian man who knows most about the actual situation in Indonesia is Mr T.K. Critchley Ambassador to Indonesia, who is now in Canberra. You might also like to write to him.

Aside from his practical introductions, Macmahon Ball's personal experience in Southeast Asia also gave them an insight into how they should present their scheme:

> I think it is also important that, in putting up your scheme, you should avoid any suggestion (a) that you are proposing it out of pure kindness and goodwill, since the Indonesians are very sensitive about any suggestion that they should be the objects of Western benevolence; and (b) that you are trying to oust the Dutch from those opportunities of technical and administrative assistance which many of them now seem anxious to give. I think it would be wise to present your proposal as a desire to supplement the technical and professional assistance which Indonesia is at present getting from other countries, a desire based on a realistic recognition of the mutual benefits that this kind of cooperation can produce.[51]

In December 1950 committee members sent letters to the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra and the Australian Embassy in Jakarta and to several other relevant contacts. From the outset, the committee and Macmahon Ball agreed that both governments should be involved and that, if possible, the scheme should be formalised through intergovernmental cooperation. In introducing the idea of their scheme to both governments, the committee invoked the spirit of the Colombo Plan. As John Bayly stated in his letter to the Indonesian Minister for Internal Affairs in December 1950, 'Already many Indonesian students have come to Australia, and many Australians have felt that good relations between the two countries could be further promoted by a complementary scheme, along lines suggested at the Colombo Conference, assisting Australian University students and graduates to study and work in Indonesia.'[52] Both the Australian and Indonesian sides initially responded with enthusiasm, tempered with caution. As Vern Bailey wrote to Macmahon Ball in late December, 'Every support seems to be forthcoming from the Australian side, but the attitude of the Australian Embassy seemed somewhat sceptical, though kindly!'[53]

Meanwhile, by December 1950 plans were well in train for Herb's journey to Indonesia and his employment in its civil service in the Ministry for Information (Kementerian Penerangan: Kempen) under Molly Bondan's direction for two years, beginning in June 1951. The philosophical premise behind his adventure was also established. He would work for a local salary and live in staff accommodation where possible. It was anticipated that Herb would be the first and that other volunteer graduates would soon follow him. Crucially, Macmahon Ball agreed that Herb would carry out research in Indonesia for his Masters thesis under his supervision, which meant that he was eligible to receive

a travel grant to cover the cost of his passage to Jakarta.

Herb and Betty's regular visits to Frank Engel at the Methodist Church offices in central Melbourne brought them into contact with other people there, including Frank Byatt, coordinator of the Church's charity arm. Byatt spotted Herb's particular organisational skills and penchant for generating enthusiasm and invited Herb to join him in planning and developing the Church's new national charity fundraising drive. Once his final exams were over, Herb went to work with Byatt on the Christmas Bowl, a fundraising drive started a year earlier in Melbourne. Byatt was keen to expand the drive nationally, and he welcomed Herb's experience with his post-war collections and networking abilities. For Herb, work for the Christmas Bowl complemented very well his other preoccupation, which had become known as the Volunteer Graduate Scheme (VGS). On his visits to other Australian states that summer to promote the Scheme among SCM and other student groups, he also met Methodist Church people to discuss the national roll-out of the Christmas Bowl appeal.

Summer 1950–51

A holiday in the Great Dividing Range northeast of Melbourne over the Christmas break offered Herb and his parents a rare time for reflection, reading and conversation about his impending Indonesian experience. Arthur and Lily were, not surprisingly, unsure about Herb's plans to go to Indonesia. As Herb explained in a letter to Betty, the time he spent with his family had therapeutic benefits for all of them:

> The knowledge that when in the city there is mutual irritability over the most trivial matters this is due only to

> (or almost only) to nervousness and the strain of Mum and Dad's overworking, is certainly cheering. We've really always known it, but in the last week it has struck us in very very forceful fashion. It all bears on the Indonesian business of course. It will mean a good bit of anxiousness on my part lest they should overwork themselves again in the New Year. But on the other hand it'll be wonderful to go away in utter and complete love for my parents and without any remote feelings that might be construed as desire to escape them and family responsibilities …[54]

On holiday Herb's reading included *Out of Exile*, the recently published memoir of Indonesia's first Prime Minister, Sutan Sjahrir; George Orwell's new dystopian novel *1984*; the Penguin compendium on *Comparative Religion*; and the Bible. This collection of books represented the themes Herb was most interested in at the time: Indonesia, totalitarianism and democracy, Christianity, theology and religion, morality and ethics. Christianity, which he then described as 'a terrifically interesting subject', remained a puzzle for Herb. Writing to Betty while on holiday, Herb explained, 'It's quite difficult for me, just how to separate, if indeed that is what one ought to do, the critical "scientific" reading and appraisal of the scriptures, the search for clues pointing to particular interpretations of theology, or Christianity or the nature of religion, from the devotional reading of them in the way of the performance of "Spiritual Exercises".'[55] In many ways, his experience in Indonesia, a foreign place, at this point in his life, would separate Herb from the tensions increasingly associated with his two worlds at home. It is unlikely, however, that Arthur and Lily were prepared for the possibility that the predominantly Christian milieu within which he

was increasingly involved in Melbourne before his departure in 1951 would feature even more strongly as an influence on him in Indonesia.

Not surprisingly, Herb was reading everything he could find on Indonesia, its politics, culture and religion. Of the subject of one of his holiday books, Sutan Sjahrir, he wrote to Betty:

> Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the man [Sjahrir] is his wonderful tolerance and his complete absence of bitterness against his gaolers … he's really a 18th century liberal humanitarian, completely universal in his outlook, seeking to make himself educated in all branches of knowledge … The general problem which Sjahrir posed for me was this one of specialisation and acceleration and totalitarianism. It's of course particularly acute when one starts applying our ideas of national to Indonesia …[56]

In early January the committee took up Frank Engel's invitation to present the premise for their scheme at the Australian SCM national conference in Armidale, NSW. As Frank Engel had anticipated, the response from its delegates, 'a large and vigorous ecumenical national student movement',[57] was overwhelmingly positive. Seven graduates immediately expressed firm interest in participating in a scheme that, as Engel reminded them, 'didn't exist'. The group returned to Melbourne in a buoyant mood full of plans for the scheme. Herb headed home to Caulfield and Betty immediately transferred to another bus to join her family on holiday at Apollo Bay on Victoria's Great Ocean Road.

The next day, 20 January, Betty's father rushed to rescue her mother from a rip while they were swimming in the bay and was drowned. Betty was 19, her sister Lorraine 17 and her brothers

Ray and Derek 11 and seven respectively. Betty's mother Ina became desperately ill and, although she was in shock, Betty, as the eldest child, quickly found herself taking over responsibility for her siblings. She called Herb to ask for his help with her brothers and, without hesitating, Herb and his father drove the three or more hours from Melbourne to Apollo Bay. While her mother and aunts returned to Melbourne for her father's funeral, Betty, Herb and the Evans children remained at the beach. Betty recalled the moment of Herb's arrival more than fifty years later: 'I remember thinking at the time in a quite definite way, "I'm going to marry him if he'll have me."'[58]

For the next year Betty's mother was largely incapacitated with grief and depression and, although her mother's sister provided support, Betty was thrust into the position of head of the household, caring for three younger siblings. It was also her first year as a student teacher. Herb was extremely worried about the toll this burden would take on Betty, and in the weeks that followed Betty's father's death he began to change his mind about going to Indonesia, now planned for the middle of the year. In the midst of his deliberations, although he was careful not to discuss them with Betty, Herb wrote to Betty's aunt for advice. Her response urged Herb to go, promising that Betty would be looked after in his absence: 'I really do not think that they would wish for that, and frankly I feel that it would be a worry to them if they thought for one minute that you entertained the thought. Their wish and Mr Evans' wish would most certainly be that you carry on your life's work *without delay* …'[59] As a founding member of the Scheme, Betty too had much invested in Herb's pending adventure and would not have countenanced any delay in his plans for Indonesia and the Scheme. Yet Betty's increased closeness to and reliance on

Herb in the months following her father's death were changing them both, and any time spent apart often proved painfully difficult.

Underlying Herb's quest to go to Indonesia, to live as ordinary Indonesians did and to contribute to its new nationalism, was a yearning for space in which he could contemplate his own life and identity. The Indonesian experience was planned, as Herb had designed it quite consciously, to help him resolve tensions between his European self and his Australian self – to help him discover who he was in a neutral, third setting.

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The next few months were extremely busy. In addition to taking Indonesian lessons from Sabarsoedisman, who was on the staff of the Indonesian Consulate in Melbourne, Herb spent a great deal of time with Betty and her family, continued his work for the Christmas Bowl and carried on developing and promoting the VGS. Before he left for Indonesia Herb wrote an article for Melbourne University's student newspaper *Farrago*, explaining the merits of a purposeful engagement with Australia's nearest neighbour and now independent nation:

> Here is our nearest neighbour, a country of close on 75 million people. The crucial growing pains stages of the 'new' country's development are of considerable pertinence for Australians if only for their political and strategic significance … the leading part Australia played in the Republic's recent emancipation … the relatively favourable prospect for political democracy in Indonesia … its tremendous need for technical, administrative and other trained personnel …[60]

Before Herb's departure in June, with Molly Bondan's backing, the VGS committee gained the in-principle support of the Indonesian Government to complement that which it had received from the Australian Government.

PART 2

THREE

Going up: Indonesia (1951–53)

> My own notes in 1951–52 are a good illustration of the dangers of naïve goodwill. I wasn't uncritical but I had a firm belief that Indonesians are very similar to Westerners that all human brings are really pretty similar, etc, a belief which blinded me to a very great deal of social and political behaviour.
>
> Herb Feith, handwritten note[1]

Herb's plans for his Indonesian experience rapidly gained momentum. Roeslan Abdulgani, Secretary General of the Ministry of Information (Kementerian Penerangan, Kempen), approved his two-year appointment as a civil servant, or *pegawai*, in the English-language division of the Ministry. It was agreed that Herb would at first stay with Molly Bondan and her family in their government-provided house in Kebayoran Lama. In Melbourne, he continued his Indonesian lessons with Sabarsoedisman, an

Indonesian Consulate staff member. Writing a few months later from the Italian ship *Surriento* on his journey to Jakarta, Herb told his parents he was able to chat about the weather, the food and his 'not being Dutch'[2] with his fellow Indonesian passengers.

As Herb had anticipated, his departure on 16 June was a difficult separation from his parents and from Betty, to whom he had grown even closer in the months since her father's death. Herb urged them to remain in touch in his absence, and they all assured him that they would. Herb and Betty were confident that they could weather their extended separation. Their shared work around the Volunteer Graduate Scheme strengthened their confidence, as did the long-term plan that Betty would join Herb in his work in Indonesia. Indeed, a photograph of Herb and Betty on the deck of the *Surriento* before it sailed shows a cheerful and relaxed couple; Herb's wide smile and Betty's sparkling eyes give little indication of the difficulty they would soon experience in their extended separation.

His departure was preceded by farewell occasions involving family, friends and gifts, including cooking equipment from the ever-practical Mrs Evans, a box of fruit from the Lawlers, and from Betty a prayer book and letter to be opened once he'd set sail. Writing to Betty a few weeks later Herb recalled the difficulty of their parting, revealing his concern for his parents, in particular:

> When I remember that terrible Saturday afternoon I realize the meaning of it all, and how wonderfully brave they – and you – have been. It was another of those dread experiences that make you so young and yet so old. For me it has now, praise be all but passed although I'm certain there'll be many more sharp pangs in the next two years.[3]

Herb was in the throes of seasickness and homesickness in the first days at sea. He wrote to his parents:

> Jim and I used to say last year that as soon as we left home we'd be frightfully homesick but in my case at least, the attempt to be merry and keep everyone else so did induce a false self-confidence. Well that's collapsed. But I know I'll regain my balance, perhaps not to[o] overconfident a balance, in a couple of days. Why I already sang in the bathroom tonight.[4]

As he had predicted, the malaise soon lifted as he got to know his fellow passengers and crew, who were mostly Italians together with a few French, Australians and Indonesians. Herb's first letter home reveals him already enjoying the multinational, multicultural and multilingual nature of shipboard life. His own identity was more opaque and fluid than ever in this setting. Herb bonded with his 'friendly, easy-going … if surprisingly contemptuous of foreigners' Australian cabin-mates, with French Jews who were both 'very French' and 'very Jewish', returning to Europe because they found Australia 'unsuitable as a place to settle', and with the Italians and Indonesians as well.

On his second day Herb went looking for a quiet and cool place to sit and read. Absorbed in his novel, he was asked by one of the ship's crew what class of ticket he was travelling on. When Herb replied that he held an economy class ticket, the crewman requested that he leave the deck and return below. This was a first-class deck. Herb politely and courteously assured the man that he would indeed move. Sometime later the crewman returned to find Herb where he had left him. This time he asked that Herb report immediately to the ship's captain. In a meeting with the captain, conducted in French, which Herb described as

an 'interrogation', his fluid identities – linguistic, ethnic, national and class – converged. The captain, already annoyed at Herb's impudence in flouting the ship's class hierarchies, was further incensed when he realised this was 'the bloke who'd boarded the boat late yesterday', thereby delaying the ship's departure. Clearly a recalcitrant passenger! Herb was very conscious of the stereotyping associated with the different nationalities of the ship's passengers and revelled in his ability to confuse these classifications and so too the crewman and especially his captain: 'I certainly never did like cashing in on my good suit and knowledge of English. Apparently the fact that I look more like an Australian than an Italian betrayed me.'[5]

The *Surriento* stopped in Sydney where Herb had a busy schedule of appointments: tea with his father's cousin Edith and her husband Fernand Argy, who were then living in Sydney; lunch with Joe Garrett from the Australian Association for the United Nations, with whom he discussed contacts in Jakarta and the possibility of acting as delegate to a conference of UN Non-Governmental Agencies there next month; and a meeting with a Hungarian Jewish concentration camp survivor whom Herb introduced to Joe Garrett and Edith in the hope of connecting him with people in Jakarta ('totally alone in the world – what worse fate could befall anyone!'). Molly Bondan's brother Charles Warner loaded a bike on board the *Surriento* for Herb to deliver to Molly. Between Sydney and Brisbane, Herb, now with a cabin of his own, set to work on an article for the SCM's publication *Australian Intercollegian* about plans for the Volunteer Graduate Scheme and his own trip.

Herb thrived in the atmosphere on board the ship in which, as he described it, international gossip and rumour-mongering were rife. He found himself discussing global politics with

Scandinavians and the shortcomings of Australia as a new home with Dutchmen, Italians and French. In the final days of his voyage he met an Australian who had spent several years in the Netherlands Indies during the war and had become very attached to the people and the place. He excited Herb with renditions of the generosity and warmth of the Indonesian people and assured him that Australians were tremendously popular: 'As long as I say I'm an Australian, he says, and swear like a trooper, the Indonesians will accept me fully and I'll love them as he did.'[6]

First impressions

Refusing offers from porters to carry his bags, Herb disembarked from the *Surriento* in Jakarta's Tanjung Priok harbour, where his host and mentor Molly Bondan greeted him. He was the only disembarking passenger and, as no continuing passengers were allowed to go ashore, he boarded the motorboat sent to ferry him into port alone. Within minutes of meeting Molly, Herb deduced a great deal more about the woman he had corresponded with for many months and recorded in one of the first of what were to become his famous circular or 'chain' letters home:

> What's she like? Normal features, neither beautiful nor plain, except for the bright eyes and the worn face very much like an ordinary Australian housewife … A very deliberate voice, habitual as a result of trying to speak clear, easily intelligible English … the impression of a beaut combination of idealism and good sense. Perhaps not as sparkling a personality as the wonderful letters had me to expect but all the more ideal a workmate, and even steady, reliable and mature enough to fulfil some of the functions of a mother.[7]

Herb's first impressions of Jakarta and its bureaucracy are also recorded:

> No trouble with the military guard at the port, and we're on our way in this same truck to the town of Djakarta and through to Kebayoran. A terribly exciting trip! You couldn't imagine any city more conspicuously lacking in any semblance of planning of the most primitive sort. Roads, paddocks, railway lines, swamps, house stores, factories, literally all over the place … If the group project committee sends out any town planning architects, there'll be plenty of work for 'em …[8]

Herb cast his eye across Jakarta and saw a world of possibility for his fellow Australian graduates who wanted to come to Indonesia, still war-ravaged, to help them build a new nation. He described his first weeks in Indonesia as some of the most exciting and exhilarating of his life. His letters to his friends and family three weeks after his arrival reveal that he was immediately and deeply engaged in his work, with the people he met and with the social problems he saw, which he very quickly took on as his own:

> Well things are continuing to go very well. Despite the terribly big problems that are bearing down on us all here – social problems, the demoralising servility of servants and the unsatisfactory state of our government departments – I'm coming to feel more and more at home every day. Molly is beaut to work with, as are all our people here. There's a wonderful friendliness everywhere – I'm already making friends with people that I meet biking to and from town, and with lots of the thousands of beaut kids in our street …[9]

Herb set to work alongside Molly in the English-language section at Kempen. He was warmly welcomed into the Bondan home in Kebayoran by Molly, her husband, who was a senior public servant in the Ministry for Labour, and their son Alit. A few weeks later he moved not far down the road from the Bondans' house to live with Mustapha, a member of parliament, and his family but continued to share evening meals with the Bondans. Herb knew very little Indonesian language at this stage and was critically aware of the importance of speaking Indonesian so that he could really get to know the people and the place. He was frustrated by his slow progress with the language, exacerbated by the fact that English was spoken in his workplace and Dutch among the political elite. At the same time, he was also content to fall in with the rhythms of Jakarta life and recuperate after the busy and emotional months before his departure from Australia:

> In fact I'm not, as I so often was in Australia, in a constant hurry. Everyone does things slowly here – if you run all the children laugh at you and I suppose to some extent I'm adapting myself to this oriental speed of doing things. One favourable consequence is that I've been late at places less often than I was in Australia![10]

Herb's only experience of tropical heat and energy-sapping humidity had been on his passage through Middle Eastern and South Asian ports on his voyage to Australia twelve years earlier. Melbourne's hot and dry summers had done little to prepare him for conditions in Jakarta. In a typical exchange between mother and son, Herb sought to assuage Lily's concerns that he was doing too much:

> Yes, it's true there are a lot of people to see all the time and always thousands of new impressions and ideas, often bewilderingly profuse. And the group project – which is making such wonderful progress at both ends – has taken a great deal of time and thought, particularly in the last week … But for all that I am really basically living a peaceful life …[11]

A nation in transition

When Herb arrived in Jakarta in July 1951, Indonesia's Provisional Constitution, which came into force on 17 August 1950, was less than a year old and the nation's third cabinet was being installed. The Republic's first cabinet, led from December 1949 to August 1950 by Prime Minster Hatta, had been dominated by what Herb called 'men of the Republic' and was always considered only a transitional cabinet. Its replacement, the Natsir cabinet (August 1950–March 1951), had been buffeted by political issues, which limited its ability to get on with the tasks of consolidating and developing the economy and restoring security. This, the third cabinet in eighteen months of statehood, was led by Sukiman Wirjosandjojo and was formed after much brokering between the two largest political parties Masjumi and Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI). Although Herb had followed Indonesian politics as closely as possible before he left Australia, its full complexity would only now become clear.

During Herb's first two years in Indonesia, yet another cabinet would come and go. To know Indonesian politics at this time required understanding a chaotic and ever-changing combination of personalities and party alliances and their still somewhat fluid ideologies. The tasks before the early governments of the Republic of Indonesia were immense: industries

and communication infrastructure damaged by years of fighting needed to be restored; Republican and Dutch-built federal states of the new nation needed to be unified; and the revolutionary movement needed to be reconciled within the transition to an inclusive legal and administrative entity. 'The fiery idealism of Jogjakarta and the days of guerrilla fighting had to be accommodated in the Dutch-established structure of Djakarta.' In 1951 as the governmental machinery established itself in the city, political life was very much centred in Jakarta. Decisions were made in Jakarta with the executive – the cabinet and President – so this was where the political parties concentrated their activities and efforts. The Sukiman cabinet (April 1951–February 1952) brought the two largest political parties together so, while not faced with the limitations imposed by a strong opposition, it suffered internal divisions that led to its characterisation as 'a series of policy zigzags'.[12]

Herb entered an Indonesia that was politically unstable and whose people were quickly becoming disillusioned with its leaders, whom they saw as having abandoned the revolutionary élan for self-seeking endeavours. A term used often in the popular media and in urban society at the time was *krisis achlak* (moral crisis). The pace of change in Indonesia in the previous two years had meant that revolutionary morality was losing its relevance, but no new set of standards for behaviour was yet in place. As Herb put it, 'Resentment was expressed at the luxuries which the new elite of Indonesians could afford, and the growing gulf between the masses to whom they had been brought so much closer by the Revolution.'[13] Economic policy was focused on export industries and on the formation of agricultural cooperatives, but there was little funding for industrialisation. Indonesia's economy had neither the capital investment to make it possible nor the skills to

see it through. Meanwhile the price of rice continued to rise as it had under the Natsir cabinet and the security situation remained tense in Java, where rebel bandit activity continued to cause alarm. In early August 1951 Herb wrote to his parents about a firefight the previous evening near Tanjung Priok, not far from where a group of foreign conference delegates were staying. As he indicates, there were several potential suspects: '… looks very much like an attempt by the fanatical Dar-ul-Islam people or the Communists, or the "Proletariat Party" (rabid nationalists who call themselves Marxists) or some old Dutch army men in the Indonesian army – to discredit the government in the eyes of the foreigners.'[14]

Workers strikes were also threatening some vital industries, and there was growing suspicion within sections of the government of the involvement of Partai Kommunis Indonesia (PKI). Police posts were raided and other random violence occurred. Prime Minister Sukiman became increasingly convinced of communist involvement in these destabilising activities and possible plans for a *coup d'état*. Without consulting his cabinet widely, Sukiman ordered sweeping arrests in Jakarta and other parts of Java and Sumatra in mid-August. Although the government declared that the searches and mass arrests were not directed at any ideological or political group, most of those detained in the raids – among them journalists, labour leaders and political activists – were ethnic Chinese or supporters of the PKI.[15] Parts of Jakarta were too dangerous to travel in at night, but Herb assured his parents that in Kebayoran and around the Kempen offices 'why you just never think of security'.[16]

The Bondans

At the Bondans' home, where politicians, civil servants, former rebels and leading intellectuals regularly called to visit, Herb discovered himself to be at what seemed like the epicentre of Indonesia's fledgling political world. It was a unique and intense crash course in Indonesian politics and current debate, and Herb gave a sense of it in his letters home:

> I've had some beaut talks with various people, very valuable for my as yet very poor 'understanding' of the whole situation here. But they've all been easy chatty talks, mostly with students and people in the neighbourhood here (MPs of course!) and friends whom Molly's asked out to her place – and of course with Molly herself. Yes, I still feel very much in need of just talks and chats about various Indonesian subjects, more or less casually chosen.[17]

The network of visitors coming through the Bondans' house was a rich source of passionate nationalist views from which Herb could learn. Molly was as fiercely committed to the nationalist project as her husband and the politicians and other *pegawai* who came to her home. Herb quickly discovered that Molly's passionate loyalty sometimes precluded rigorous critique of the nation's founding leaders: 'To a certain extent she remains despite all her practical experience, the type of emotional Leftist. She must I think be exaggerating both the wickedness and stupidity of the Dutch. Perhaps the fact that her nationalism is nationalism of an adopted nation makes her the less critical of it.'[18]

Nonetheless, it was Molly who provided Herb with timely advice and warnings about his own position in Jakarta as an

employee of Kempen, as a foreigner and as a student of Indonesia's political system – roles that required him to retain his objectivity. An early example of this being a challenge arose in late July when Herb's accommodation arrangements were raised. Herb heard that Suwito, head of the Foreign Affairs department of Kempen, was considering inviting him to board in his residence in central Jakarta. Molly and Suleiman, the head of Herb's section in Kempen, agreed that if the offer was made, Herb should turn it down because of 'the disadvantages of being unable to disagree seriously with one's landlord and being thought ever more closely associated with the Ministry':

> Molly very sensibly said that my position in the latter regard must remain very different from hers and that I must never allow myself to be thought merely an Indonesian government propagandist if I wanted to be effective outside …
>
> I've seen little signs in myself you know, such as speaking not only of the Ministry but of the Indonesian people generally as 'we'. And that's not natural. But I certainly must be careful, to meet overseas people, have plenty of contacts in all political and racial groups and be scrupulously objective in any signed article that I might write.[19]

One way of ensuring this, Molly advised further, was to change his accommodation regularly in the interests of being exposed to a wide range of political and social viewpoints and of protecting himself against accusations of partiality.

As well as providing a place for education and intellectual conversation in Herb's early months, the Bondans provided a family setting not unlike his own, where laughter, conversation

and music were shared. He and Bondan shared a passion for the violin, and they occasionally played together. Herb thought very highly of Bondan's political maturity and his aesthetic sensibility. Always aware of his parents' anxieties about his tendency to overwork, Herb reassured them that life was not all serious. At the 'mad Bondans', as he called them, he also enjoyed a good dose of '*Blödeln*' or fun.[20] Even after he had moved from their home, Molly and Bondan kept a protective watch over Herb. Molly was well aware from her correspondence with him before he left Australia of Herb's eagerness and pure enthusiasm. She was wary of these traits because she knew well the difficulties of his work and of Indonesian social and physical conditions – of the potential toll it could take on him once he was in Indonesia. Molly and his parents' wariness was vindicated as Herb experienced periodic spells of extreme fatigue and often unexplained illness.

Herb's high personal expectations of understanding the Indonesians as people and as a nation, as well as their language, placed heavy demands on him in his first months in Jakarta:

> Here often still I ask questions which are quite ridiculous to the people I'm talking to. My understanding of the thinking of Indonesians is still terribly limited. Not that I feel basically different or incapable of coming to understand the Indonesians. The intellectuals at least I feel I'll understand in the long run. But at the present there are still many gaps in my knowledge, so many Western ideas which I unthinkingly apply to situations which they cannot fit, that I often feel I'm a long, long way off from the point where I can feel myself into the situation of the Indonesians …[21]

Civil service

Under Molly's wing Herb took to his work in Kempen with typical gusto. The Indonesian civil service was a large and cumbersome bureaucracy, drastically depleted of educated and experienced personnel by the departure of the Dutch. According to the Round Table Agreement, Dutch citizens remaining in Indonesia were guaranteed their 1949 salaries for two years, after which they would be on Indonesian salary scales. By 1951 most of them had left Indonesia. This was, however, a time of gross expansion in the civil service. In 1952 there were 571 243 public servants, compared with 144 974 under the Dutch in 1930. As Herb saw it, many of those employed were given jobs as a reward for their contribution to the struggle for independence and perhaps to prevent them from becoming another potential source of instability: 'There were grounds for the charge that the government service was a charitable institution.'[22] Many civil servants were young, fiercely nationalist men and women, without skills but desiring further education and dedicated to serving their nation. Herb described their status: 'To be a government servant in 1950 was not only a matter of high prestige, as it had been all the century. It was seen as being literally in the service of the nation, as being part of the spearhead of national progress … It was to be close to the sacred symbols of nation and nationality.'[23] With its huge numbers and under-skilled workforce, the civil service was inefficient, prone, to a certain extent, to corruption and laziness and, for many of its employees, to a lack of meaningful work.

For all of his time in Kempen, Herb was often frustrated by the slow pace of life and of work especially. In a pamphlet he later wrote for prospective volunteer graduates, he presented a frank appraisal of the work environment:

> Indeed no one thinking of working in Indonesia should underestimate the frustrations that he is likely to experience as a result of bureaucratic procrastination, casualness and confusion. Lack of funds, lack of equipment, lack of appropriate personnel, lost files, internal factionalism, personal, political and racial animosities and corruption – one must learn to live with all of these. And while it is all understandable at the level of abstractions, as one of the concomitants of an administrative apparatus where incentives are poorly adjusted to responsibilities, in effect one of the consequences of technological and economic underdevelopment, it is very hard to put up with in practice, when one is trying to get something worthwhile done. Even with the comfort of knowing that Indonesians suffer equally from this complex of bureaucratic maladies, it is often hard to take.[24]

The electricity supply was unreliable, buildings were hot and uncomfortable, and avoiding dengue fever, stomach bugs and the like almost impossible. Despite this assessment and difficulties of everyday life and work in Jakarta, Herb found no lack of excitement and interest in his own work at Kempen. He mostly wrote and edited articles for its English-language monthly publication, *Indonesian Affairs*, which was intended to introduce the English-speaking world to Indonesian current affairs, arts, geography and to its view of world affairs. Herb also contributed to the Ministry's regular radio broadcasts, which provided a summary of news and current affairs in English.

In August, on assignment for *Indonesian Affairs*, Herb gained his first and lasting impression of rural Indonesia. He was to accompany a government doctor, Sudarsono, on his rounds of clinics to treat yaws, which was spreading rapidly because of a lack

of medical personnel willing to treat the infection, and to write a report for the journal. Their day trip took them through villages just thirty kilometres or so west of Jakarta, but Herb found the contrast with the large city so great it was as if he was in a different place altogether: 'I'd heard often enough about Djakarta showing the worst sides of Indonesia without many of the best ones, but only on Tuesday did I really understand what that meant.'[25] He was excited too by the prospect that he was 'probably the first white to go through those villages', although this was highly unlikely. Although he was conscious that his commentary was naïve, it was very much that of the white man observing the natives in all their romantic primitivism. Herb quickly turned his attention to the social structures of the village: 'There was no school in this village or anywhere near it, and of course no doctor within normal travelling distance … The general impression was of a people not so very different from country people anywhere …' He also compared their living arrangements with those of the kampong dwellers in the city: 'The little houses of bamboo matting seemed reasonably neat certainly very much so compared to those similar ones in the city kampongs.' It was as though he was finally experiencing the Indonesia he had imagined from Melbourne: 'All the things I've read in books suddenly came alive and got real meaning, and I felt that for the first time I understood something, had begun to understand something. A remarkable feeling …'[26] As his work at Kempen kept him in Jakarta, Herb held on to this early and somewhat romantic vision of the Indonesian village.

Herb very quickly formed a good relationship with his colleagues and team leaders, including Roeslan Abdulgani. No doubt with Molly's good word as encouragement, Roeslan took an immediate interest in Herb's research plans and encouraged

him by offering to assist him with his thesis in whatever way he could. He also had suggestions for the direction of the research: 'He thinks that if I can do anything on aspects of democracy in Indonesia, the ways in which village democracy can be made effective on the national level … it would be of use to the Ministry and taken up by it.' However, Herb was wary of the potential of a conflict arising between his role as independent researcher and his position as an employee of the Ministry: 'I can see the difficulties involved here, and that my thesis would be academically next to worthless if written primarily for Kempen, [but] the interest is very encouraging …'[27]

By November, Herb was more comfortable speaking in Indonesian and Dutch. As he told his parents, 'I seem to be getting the "feel" of them a bit more', and with this came a confidence to engage more fully with those around him. As well as his work obligations, Herb took on other tasks much as he had done in his student days. Some of his earliest contacts outside work were with the wives of his colleagues, members of parliament and party leaders, to whom he taught English and discussed the pressures on the family and Jakarta's social problems. Encouraged by his colleagues who were keen to improve their English-language skills, but even more keen to learn about the political process, Herb started a tutorial for colleagues from the Ministry. It soon expanded to include students and active politicians. The group discussed topics as diverse as the US-brokered Japanese peace treaty that was being negotiated, the Australian Labor Party and 'whether under socialism drivers should be paid more highly than presidents'.[28] As his circle of friends grew, Herb, together with Kapto, a colleague from Kempen and editor of *Indonesian Affairs*, formed an international research group, which was attended by various politicians, artists, expatriate academics and students. As

the language and place became more familiar, the politics, which is what he was there to observe up close, also came into better focus.

Facing the moral dilemma

Although Herb's assurances to his parents that he was indeed relaxing and enjoying himself might have been true, he wrote to a friend back in Melbourne, in a far darker mood, 'It's all so very real here when you see some of this terrible poverty and disease and degradation. It's really quite unimaginable Eric, and makes you just all too conscious of your own shortcomings and sins, how pitiably little you're doing, how sinful in thought and act.'[29]

In his first months in Indonesia Herb was intensely confronted by and preoccupied with the moral and ethical questions about the poverty he saw and about his inability as a foreigner to do anything about it:

> It all presents terrible problems: how far to go to show one's moral indignation at it all, how far to fit in; how far to work for social equality in an organised systematic way and how far to be uncalculatingly true to one's momentary passion and desire to witness. These things are indeed often on my mind, and I'm far from having got far with solving them.[30]

An article Herb wrote on an assignment for *Indonesian Affairs* on the yaws epidemic in the villages stressed the desperate need for more doctors. As he wrote to his parents, he hoped it would 'arouse the conscience of the West – and indeed of this country – to a realization of what is going on in fields like this and what material limitations are handicapping it', adding, 'if only I could use my typewriter to good advantage …'[31]

Herb was frustrated by the systems in Indonesia – economic, political and social – which he saw as benefiting a few and perpetuating the suffering of many. The lack of doctors willing to accept poor civil servants' wages for doing the desperately needed work was one of the things that frustrated him. The work that was needed was difficult, technically boring and poorly paid, so Herb understood that it would not attract doctors. He also found the juxtaposition of Indonesia's encounter with the modern and the foreign (representing the West) and its unaddressed mammoth social calamities most acute in the marketplace:

> … its unscrupulous petty haggling, amid the bevy of smooth spivs grabbing you to get foreign currency out of you at black rates, and amid a really hideous din of wirelesses blaring yankee hits at you – yes there amid all that are beggars with their frightening deformities, and as well as them the hundreds of miserable-looking hangers-around, skinny, diseased, ragged and worried-looking.[32]

The systemic problems came to bear on Herb at a personal level as he was confronted by the poverty and despair in his daily travels across Jakarta, and unsure about how he should respond:

> I'm still very uncertain in my own mind when and how much I should give to beggars. There are all sorts of complicated questions linked with this, how far one should act on sudden impulses, how far to plan one's giving, whether one should give only where one can talk and advise them, take them to a clinic or something of the sort, and whether it is to actual beggars that one should give or to people generally who seem in dire need …[33]

It is not clear whether these were questions and concerns Herb felt comfortable discussing with Molly and Bondan. To discuss these concerns he turned to another set of friends with whom he became especially close during his first year in Indonesia.

When Herb arrived in Indonesia, a defence attaché at the Australian Embassy tried hard to talk Herb 'out of the Indonesia idea', and chastised him for wearing short pants, which might make people think he was a communist. Indeed the relationship between the VGS people and the embassy was a distant one in the early years of the Scheme. Embassy staff assumed that this distance was due to Molly Bondan's warning the volunteers not to have too close a relationship with them. Herb's own early interactions with the embassy show that they showed a degree of hostility and were patronising towards the volunteers to the extent that he was convinced that, although an official relationship was necessary, it would be best for the VGS remain detached from the embassy. Given his early negative experiences with some Australian embassy staff, Molly's advice and, most of all, the still evolving philosophical basis of the Scheme, Herb deliberately avoided close contact with Australian expatriates, most of whom were embassy staffers. The cocktail and tennis circuit of the expatriate and diplomat was indeed incongruous to the Scheme's mission – to live and work alongside and as Indonesians. Rather, his contact with expatriates was with a very particular group. In addition to the Bondans, Herb's first introductions in Jakarta were largely through SCM contacts.

Through these contacts Herb met the Rosins, a Swiss couple, the Dutch Ridel and van Doorn families, and an Indo-European, Tina Franz. Herb turned to the Rosins, Tina and other friends made through the SCM and in Christian circles in Jakarta to discuss his personal moral dilemma. With the exception of Tina,

they were all Europeans most of whom had lived in Indonesia for long periods; the Rosins had been interned during the Japanese Occupation. When they were all together they spoke Dutch. Tina, Secretary of the Indonesian SCM, had a particularly strong influence on Herb: 'She was I think the first person here to tell me that beggars were, every time she saw one, for her a personal problem.' He was also particularly drawn to the theologian Rosin and his family, who reminded him of his own family in many ways. Herb revelled in the shelves of German books he found in their home and in his conversations with Rosin exploring questions of the Judeo-Christian ideas of peace and justice, Marx and Buber. Herb described Rosin to his parents: 'As a good socialist he is consciously reacting against the aims of theologians of the past who preached opiate Christianity …'

With Tina Franz and Rosin, Herb was able to talk about his broader concerns about the moral problems arising out of the social situation in Indonesia, particularly from ongoing processes of modernisation or Westernisation:

> [He] told me a lot about his discussions of these sorts of problems with the SCM here, and particularly about their response to his calls for radical levelling and social identification of intellectuals with the masses. This is something that's been very much on my mind, and I'm very determined to look into it … of course it's very relevant to our graduate employment scheme …[34]

Herb attended church now and then with his friends, and increasingly turned to thoughts of God and his spirituality. Always open and honest in his correspondence with his parents, Herb wrote often of his friendships with the Rosins and van Doorns and of

his church attendance. For his parents, but particularly for Lily, the news prompted considerable unease. Herb sought to allay his mother's concerns, although this was not easy:

> I forgot last time to answer your question Mum about whether I tell my SCM contacts about my Jewishness. Well yes I do as soon as opportunity arises, for instance when I'm asked, as I generally am, what Church I belong to. In fact of course the position demands a fairly lengthy explanation and this I gave to Tina Francz [i.e. Franz] and the Ridels and more briefly to Dr Leimena [SCM President and Minister of Health]. In fact what matters to people as broadminded as these is my *thinking* (and acting) rather than any official token of *membership* of any religious group. This I try to tell people about when I can. But where there's not opportunity for lengthier explanations I just say I'm Jewish and unbaptised but a member of the SCM and interested in the Christian community here. It's always a bit of a problem for me when I have to put it in words like this but otherwise it does not worry me and I am, thank God, reasonably settled, or at least not disturbingly unsettled, in my religious views and thoughts …[35]

Although Herb's assurances to his mother in September were not new to her and were consistent with his attitude before he left Australia, Lily's anxiety about Herb's spiritual or religious commitments would continue. Meanwhile, for Herb, this group provided the kind of moral salve he craved more and more and would become increasingly important in the coming months.

In October Herb made his first trip to the home of the revolutionary government, Yogyakarta in Central Java, as a Kempen representative to observe the final stage of regional elections there, which were intended as a dress rehearsal for the yet to

be scheduled national elections. Herb's impression of the city was that it was in almost all respects the opposite of Jakarta. He admired the coexistence of the old city and culture with the infrastructure of the new and, most of all, the 'self-reliant attitude' of the people and their 'public consciousness … commercialism has not disintegrated it as in Djakarta.' When work commitments allowed, Herb visited the Buddhist temples Borobudur and Mendut outside the city, marvelling at the massive stupas atop the Borobudur pyramid, remarking on their 'combination of passivity with strength'.[36]

While in Yogyakarta, Herb's discomfort with the privileges of his position as civil servant and foreigner escalated. He struggled to breach the divide between him and those around him who had far less: 'when I got a chance to have a good talk to a betjak driver and share some food with him or to play football with some of the boys in the hotel, I felt cheered up again and a bit more human.' This sensibility extended to perceptions of his need for material possessions. In reply to his parents' inquiry about what gift he would like for his twenty-first birthday the following month, Herb pleaded: 'Please, please, please discourage people from making a fuss about this 21st birthday. I'm not exaggerating when I say I'm thoroughly ashamed of the possessions I've got, not the less so after my experience in Jogya of seeing people sleep on the wet ground in the street outside the luxurious hotel the people had booked for us!'[37]

His increasing discomfort at the point at which the foreign Western (himself and his privileges) and the local Indonesian (oppressed) intersected became more and more apparent. Although these were questions about his own place in Indonesia and more broadly his identity, Herb often articulated these frustrations through a critique of what he saw as shaming

demonstrations of the ways in which Indonesian culture was being corrupted by what he called 'Hollywood cultural influence'. In November he attended an evening at the Cultural Institute. The program included performance of dance from the Kei Islands near West Irian, which he enjoyed and described, no doubt under Kapto's tutelage, as 'an attempt at synthesis and modernisation of Javanese, Sundanese and Balinese forms'. This response was in contrast to his assessment of a play that followed: 'The actors themselves were thoroughly Hollywoodized types, the play was a 4th rate melodrama completely in the Hollywood vein without the slightest touch of anything characteristically Indonesian.'[38]

VGS business

In Australia, Betty and other members of the VGS committee circulated Herb's letters and copies of *Indonesian Affairs* widely, and they proved to be a critical tool for promoting the Scheme at SCM and NUAUS conferences and meetings on the nation's university campuses. His work for the Scheme in Indonesia also gained momentum. Herb did the rounds of ministries and department heads in Jakarta, making enquiries about their interest in employing volunteer graduates. The Indonesian Government was investing heavily in training its growing bureaucracy and the workforce at large. It had embarked on a vast training program in which each government agency developed training facilities for its staff and every large firm, foreign and Indonesian, was obligated also to provide technical training. Increasing numbers of Indonesians were also taking part in training schemes sponsored by the Colombo Plan and United Nations. In this atmosphere Herb's message about Australian graduates willing to bring their skills to the civil service was well received.

The Cory lesson

On his return from Yogyakarta in late October, Herb had a letter waiting for him from a Stan Cory from Sydney. Cory wrote that he had read a report Herb had written in an NUAUS newsletter and had taken it upon himself to book his passage to Jakarta immediately to follow his example. So spontaneous was Cory's decision that he had neither made contact with the VGS committee in Melbourne nor arranged accommodation, let alone employment, in Jakarta. He hoped Herb would help him out. Still prone to pangs of homesickness, Herb was immediately excited by the prospect of someone from home joining him. Moreover, he was not immune to flattery. Most of all, however, Herb was impressed by the man's obvious drive and chutzpah. Cory had set off on his trip the day Herb received his letter, so he could do nothing but prepare for the stranger's arrival. Rather than asking questions about his impulsiveness or perhaps impertinence, Herb was impressed. Cory had a first-rate curriculum vitae that included degrees in Arts, Law, Economics and Science from Sydney University, where he had also been employed. More than that, he was a Labor Party member and had attended an international Quaker conference.

Herb quickly set about making arrangements for Cory to stay with him at Mustapha's, where he was now boarding, and organised various meetings with officials, in the hope that it would lead to employment or, as Cory had expressed was also his desire, further study at the University of Indonesia. In the idea of Stan Cory, Herb quickly developed expectations of him as both a fellow traveller and a friend: 'I'm looking forward to his coming tremendously as you can imagine. He'll be quite invaluable here and I hope a good friend of mine.'[39]

Cory arrived two weeks later, and Herb met him at the port.

Their relationship developed over the next weeks into an intense one and, as Herb later admitted, was not unlike his relationship with Molly, who mothered him to the point of suffocation at times. Indeed, Herb did not really question exactly who Cory was or the motive for his impulsive decision to come to Jakarta, such was his excitement at having another willing Australian in his company. Herb put Cory in contact with various senior ministry staff, including Sugarda at the Ministry of Education, who went to some trouble to find him a position. By December, however, their relationship had cooled. Cory had moved into a hotel, and there is no mention of him in Herb's correspondence thereafter. Some time in December or January, Stan Cory left Jakarta suddenly, causing considerable embarrassment to Herb and the Scheme. Sugarda was particularly offended and for sometime afterwards was unwilling to consider Australians for positions in the Ministry of Education.

From this point on, Herb and the members of the committee were more vigilant and more convinced than ever of the need for careful vetting processes for prospective volunteers. As Betty Feith later wrote, 'this early "failure" cast a long shadow'.[40] The experience made the committee acutely aware of how important their reputation with the Indonesian authorities was for the future of the Scheme. The Cory business, together with the climate and conditions in Jakarta and Herb's generally frenetic pace of activity and ongoing moral anguish, took a toll on him physically. In November he found himself bedridden, unable to work and extremely frustrated.[41]

Don Anderson's visit

In late November 1951 the VGS made plans to send an Australian delegate to conferences of the Southeast Asian Student Christian

Movement in Bandung and Yogyakarta in December. Frank Engel and the VGS committee asked Don Anderson, SCM member and high school teacher, to travel to Indonesia to meet Herb and his contacts and return with his report. Neither Engel nor Anderson had much knowledge about Indonesia or Asia. Don's limited contact with Asia had been through SCM activities to welcome the first Asian students to Melbourne under the Colombo Plan. His willingness to take up Frank's offer was motivated by an idealism related to the still fluid concept for the Scheme of an attempted symbolic demonstration of equality through working with Indonesians. Don's month in Indonesia was an opportunity for Herb to consolidate what he had learned and the networks he had formed for the Scheme in his first five months in Indonesia. Although they had only met briefly before, Don and Herb immediately became firm and mutually admiring friends.

Arriving in Jakarta on 5 December 1951, Don was launched into the busy schedule of meetings Herb had organised. He responded with enthusiasm that equalled Herb's and with excitement about the people Herb had already established contact with in such a short time. At meetings with government officials and some ministers, Don relayed his message from Australia that interest in sending volunteer graduates was gathering momentum. The Indonesians were impressed by the news, which, if Herb's example in his position at Kempen was anything to go by, carried promise that the Scheme would be of great benefit to them. The timing of their proposal was crucial. As Herb would write in his analysis of the political situation in Indonesia at this time, 'Indonesia had reached a high-water mark in its relations with the (non-Dutch) West.'[42] Prime Minister Sukiman was pro-American and had a close relationship with the United States Ambassador, H. Merle Cochran, which translated into a strong

foreign policy focus on relations with the United States and its allies. Foreign Minister Subardjo had returned from visits to the United States and Australia in September, where he was warmly welcomed by both governments. From the Americans he had secured a large loan for economic and technical assistance. In this environment, the idea of a volunteer graduate scheme was met with encouragement by government officials, although, as Herb was quickly becoming all too aware, the wheels of officialdom moved very slowly in Indonesia, which caused some frustration among energetic young Australians in the coming months.

Access

Herb believed his connections with Molly and Bondan were crucial for the considerable access he had to many elite politicians and other figures in the administration: '… if I wasn't in some ways regarded as a protégé of Molly's it might not be nearly so easy, but that position gives me just wonderful privileges. Time and again I can see mistrust and secretiveness broken down just through the mention of Molly's name.'[43]

As early as September 1951 Herb had met several of the nation's leading political figures. He was particularly impressed by Sjahrir and by Mohammad Hatta, whom he described to his parents as a 'really beaut bloke, to be liked as much as respected, good humoured, friendly, sensible and idealistic, a man on whom you could thoroughly rely', but was less enthusiastic about Sukiman, the Prime Minister, and some of his ministers, whom he considered 'very much politicians'.[44] Sjahrir and the intellectual circle around his party, the Partai Sosialis Indonesia (PSI), including the very impressive Soedjatmoko, when he returned from various diplomatic activities in the United States the following year,[45] were regular visitors to the Bondan home. Herb's

attraction to Sjahrir and his policies, about which he had read, was reinforced when they met; and Soedjatmoko became, as Herb himself later described it, 'the most important of my Indonesian mentors in those years'.[46] Herb's connections with members of the Indonesian SCM also provided him with various avenues of introduction. Together this meant Herb had close relations and access to senior civil servants and members of the cabinet, including Roeslan Abdulgani, Dr Johannes Leimena (Minister for Health and SCM president) and Roem (Minister for the Interior), whom he counted as a friend.

Herb set up meetings for Don Anderson with Australian Embassy staff, politicians, department heads and other senior civil servants, members of Indonesia's SCM and student leaders. As Don explained, 'Herb made sure that I met everyone [who] was important to the Scheme … [It was] as if Herb knew the whole scene. His contacts in political and administrative circles and with students were quite extraordinary.'[47]

For Herb personally, Don's visit also provided longed-for contact with home. Don found Herb in high spirits and keen to have a bit of fun in the midst of the serious work to be done. In his weekly letter to his parents, Herb wrote excitedly about Don and his impact on the VGS project and of his own well-being since his arrival in Jakarta: 'You know I can't say too often how beaut it is to have Don here. He really is a magnificent bloke. His being worried about so many of the problems that worry me, religious, moral, political and so on, and his deep sensibility to suffering here, have drawn us together in a way which I really never expected.'[48]

Herb found he was able to talk with Don about the difficulties and frustrations of his daily working life in Jakarta, topics that he would have found extremely hard to discuss with Molly or his

colleagues at Kempen. By the end of Don's month of meetings and travels in Indonesia the two of them came to the conclusion that, for the Scheme to be viable, it was imperative for the realities of life in Indonesia to be presented to prospective volunteers from the beginning: 'Unfortunately both he and I have been forced to become a little bit less optimistic about the group scheme and other projects of the kind, chiefly because we feel that many people likely to be interested in coming wouldn't be able to face the difficulties – climate, food, health, and political antagonism …' Don's brief was to evaluate and test the idea of the Scheme in Indonesia and, despite these concerns, he was in the end 'almost uncritically supportive'.[49]

After the initial burst of excitement and energy following Don's arrival, their busy schedule of meetings began to take its toll on Herb. Fatigue and illness challenged his ability to maintain the energy levels and output he had in Melbourne, so he sometimes sent Don to appointments on his own: 'Tonight we both had the wonderful opportunity to meet Sjahrir, and Don's gone. But I felt a bit tired so just drove Don there and am now more or less (in fact more) having a rest.'[50]

New connections

Don's visit was arranged to coincide with two conferences of the Southeast Asian SCM, which he and Herb attended as representatives of the Australian SCM. For Herb the conferences would prove to be not only opportunities to discuss possibilities for the Scheme but also events of great personal significance. Even before he departed for the conferences in Bandung in mid-December and over the New Year in Yogyakarta, they presented him with some serious and profound questions. The news that Herb was attending the conferences as an Australian SCM delegate reached

his parents through publicity back in Melbourne, alarming Lily once again as she continued to be concerned about the influence that Herb's many new Christian friends in Jakarta were having on him. Again, Herb replied to his mother's concerns in a caring and sympathetic manner, but he did not concede his point:

> Naturally I can understand how you must have felt at hearing the publicity given to the fact of my being an SCM delegate, and I'm very sorry that it should have come about like this. In fact I'm surprised that it should have come to the public notice as I did explain my qualifications to Frank Engel the Secretary of the Australian SCM and he fully understood them … I can readily understand your feelings, both religious and social, and I do try to keep these and the reasons for them in mind …[51]

At the conferences, Herb's growing appreciation and empathy with Christian thinking was heightened by the people he met. The Bandung conference, held in a YMCA centre on the outskirts of the city, included mostly staff and some student leaders from Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent – including M.M. Thomas, leading Keralan theologian – and from America and Australia. The conference was opened by Dr Johannes Leimena and had the theme 'Christian Witness to the Idea of a Responsible University'. Herb was impressed by the intellect and passion of the delegates, whom he described as '25 of the best brains in Asia'. Although he found the atmosphere overwhelmingly pessimistic because much discussion of the conference themes was underlined by the sense of 'Asian social and cultural stagnancy upon which the now disintegrating Western ideologies were imposed', Herb also discovered an atmosphere of collegiality

and friendship among delegates. They demonstrated a 'combination of radical academic objectivity with passionate moral involvement', which he greatly admired and hoped to emulate in his own work. He was particularly impressed and affected by his roommate in Bandung, Kyaw Than, a Burman history lecturer and Secretary of the World Student Christian Federation, with whom he had 'long talks on Asian inferiority complex and other subjects' and came 'to feel perhaps more intimate friendship than with any other Asian' he knew.[52] In an article about the conferences for *Indonesian Affairs* Herb quoted Kyaw Than's thoughts on Christian liberty at length.[53]

In contrast to the intimacy of the Bandung conference, in Yogyakarta hundreds of student leaders met amidst the fading grandeur of the old colonial Hotel Garuda. The conference program, which had the theme 'Called unto Liberty', was not unlike those of conferences that Herb and Don had attended in Australia, and consisted of multiple lectures and discussion groups, inviting a mixture of ideas and debate. For Herb personally, the conferences proved to be both a challenge and a salve. Herb wrote home in January:

> Yes it was a very satisfying experience in many ways, although I did often feel my own insecureness of religious position a barrier to a full understanding or appreciation of it. The friendship was wonderful. It could have been an Australian conference so quickly did we come to know and understand one another. The intellectual standard and particularly the level of criticism did sometimes disappoint, but the atmosphere of friendship and frankness was wonderful. And of course it was good to be one in a bunch of laughing kids again after all my adult occupations of the last six months.[54]

Crossing frontiers

Don Anderson headed back to Australia, in time for the Australian SCM national conference in Canberra, to report on his trip and on plans for the VGS in Indonesia. The theme of the conference was 'Crossing Frontiers' with a focus on Australia's place in the region, offering a diverse program including a lecture by the China historian C.P. Fitzgerald, a Reader in Far Eastern History at the Research School for Pacific Studies at the Australian National University, at which he urged the Australian public to come to terms with 'present realities instead of past attitudes' about the region they live in.[55] Don gave a public address on 13 January, a Sunday and the second hottest day in Canberra that summer. It was somewhat remarkable, then, that in attendance were the cream of Australian politics, including the Prime Minister Robert Menzies, External Affairs Minister Percy Spender, former Solicitor-General Sir Robert Garran and the current Solicitor-General, Kenneth Bailey, who was also Vern Bailey's father. Bailey was formerly Professor of Law at Melbourne University, Vice Master at Queen's College and himself a prominent member of the Student Christian Movement in the 1930s.[56] Newly returned from Indonesia and enthusiastic about the future of the Scheme, Don spoke persuasively and his address was extremely well received. During the course of the speech, Menzies is purported to have leant across to Kenneth Bailey and asked him, 'How much will it cost?' Bailey nudged Frank Engel with the same question, who recalled, 'I had to produce a figure out of the air, which turned out to be not too far off.'[57]

Thereafter the government acted quickly. The until now 'in principle' intergovernmental agreement between Australia and Indonesia that provided the framework for the VGS was quickly drafted. The Australian Government would cover the cost of each

volunteer's passage and provide them with a bicycle for transport; the Indonesian Government would provide employment at the standard local salary. Although political troubles in Indonesia in the next few months delayed the official signing of the Agreement, in early 1952, an idea that had formed just two years earlier in Melbourne among a small group of students was well on the way to becoming reality.

The next task was to find Australian graduates who would follow Herb to Indonesia and into public service positions. Don set out on a tour of Australia, funded by the SCM, to promote the Scheme among students and graduates. Later in 1952 Melbourne University Student Representative Council (SRC) secretary Jim Webb joined the VGS committee, bringing his political and organisational skills to the Scheme. Even at this early stage there were efforts to investigate its viability in Burma and New Guinea, in accordance with a much wider vision for the program.

Moral crisis

In March, Herb wrote home to his parents,

> So meanwhile the babies and little children continue to be sold for rice and soya beans … servants come and go without any more to carry from one workplace to another than can be fitted into a sack the size of a handbag … the conspicuous lack of discomfort of parliament members on R2000 a month, whose petty factions make purposeful [work] impossible as they do, the elections that would throw them out. Can you wonder that sincere revolutionaries like Bondan … sit over their work morose and worried, and never go out?[58]

Don's departure left Herb with a sharp jolt of homesickness. The hectic demands of Don's visit, his Kempen and study workloads and, most of all, the now critical impasse he had reached about his religion – as he put it, 'Now I'm back and have lots of religious problems to solve' – all took their toll. The cause of Herb's now regular pattern of lethargy ('energylessness' as he called it) remained a mystery to him and the many medical personnel he consulted in his first six months in Jakarta. There was serious discussion in late December 1951 of removing his tonsils, but his doctors were not entirely convinced of this as a solution and the operation did not go ahead. Herb's lethargy and need for bed rest was attributed to homesickness by his hosts, the Mustaphas. He was continually frustrated by his condition and its debilitating impact, although he made light of it in letters home. In early January, physically and mentally exhausted, Herb asked his parents for more sleeping pills: 'Could you send me another bottle of those sedative pills … Yes I'm ashamed to have almost used up the 100 in 6 months, but what can I do?'[59]

His close association with his European and Eurasian Christian friends in Indonesia and friendships formed at the SCM conferences had further convinced Herb of the importance of Christianity to his world view and spiritual life. Discussions of this realisation were confined to his close friends in Australia and omitted from letters to his parents and, although he regularly attended church with his Christian missionary friends in Indonesia, Herb did not, however, choose to be baptised. Fifty years later Herb hinted that his decision not to become baptised was indeed in large part due to his respect for his mother and her Jewish faith, which also informed his own multilayered and syncretic spirituality.[60]

Coinciding more or less with these revelations about his

faith, on 1 February, after several weeks in bed, Herb visited yet another doctor. Tests of his blood, chest and tonsils did not show any abnormality, and plans to remove his tonsils were again shelved. The doctor proposed instead that the climate and a bit of influenza might explain the lethargy and responded positively to Herb's suggestion that it might also be related to homesickness and theological worries, which affected him. The doctor's assessment, although clearly only affirming Herb's own diagnosis, which a month earlier he had dismissed as teasing on the part of the Mustaphas, lifted a weight from his mind:

> Well you'd be surprised what a wonderful psychological effect this news has had on me … The change seems almost like the ones in the psycho-analytic case histories, the bringing of sub-conscious things into the conscious … I really don't know what this psychological cause is … I seem for some reason to be quite convinced that I'll be OK from now on.[61]

Herb resolved to reduce his workload. He would drop his English classes, take up offers made by Tina Franz and Dr Leimena to assist with the VGS work, more of which was being done in Melbourne now, and give up his radio broadcasts.

Crucial at this time was Herb's constant flow of correspondence with Betty. They were best friends and soul mates whose adolescent friendship and subsequent love affair had already suffered youthful ups and downs. One of his great hopes on leaving Melbourne had been that his parents and Betty would stay in touch with each other. Herb was buoyed by news of Betty's visits to his parents at Alma Road and by the reports they gave of each other. The bonding between Betty and his parents in his absence meant a great deal to him and influenced his relationship

with Betty. Much of the correspondence between Betty and Herb related to work for the Scheme. Together with the other members of the Melbourne committee, Betty and Herb lived and breathed the Scheme. In between her teaching jobs and home obligations, Betty dedicated all her spare time to this work.

In early 1952 Herb came across a call for applications for delegates for an SCM conference to be held in Travancore (later Kerala) in December that year. He immediately wrote to Betty suggesting that she apply to go as an Australian delegate. Betty doubted her credentials, but Herb did not. He encouraged her to apply and eventually celebrated her success as that of a plan truly coming together. Betty would travel with other Australian delegates, including future Prime Minister Robert Hawke, to India by ship, and they hoped that on the return trip she would call in at Jakarta for a week or so.

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By February 1952 Indonesia was again on the brink of political chaos. Although the economy, helped by a boost in exports because of the Korean War, had improved slightly under the Sukiman cabinet, it was again in decline. Tensions persisted between the need for foreign investment, which came largely from Dutch and Chinese sources, and the nationalist ideology. General disillusionment with the motives and behaviour of the political elite meant that pressure was building on the executive. Sukiman's cabinet came to be characterised by bitter factional infighting and internal division and failed to provide long-term vision and plans for the future of the nation.

In early February it was revealed that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had, without consulting his fellow cabinet members,

signed a mutual security agreement with the United States on 5 January 1952, in exchange for considerable aid. As details of the deal slowly emerged, public interest and ire quickly mounted and predictions of the imminent collapse of the cabinet circulated in the press. The main matter of contention was the extent to which Indonesia had compromised its independent foreign policy position or *politik bebas* – one of the founding doctrines of the Republic – by signing the agreement. The issue exposed the lack of cohesion within the cabinet, thus leading to a crisis of public confidence. The Sukiman cabinet resigned on 23 February, ushering in a new sense of hope for an effective and inspiring leadership and government. The political chaos and crisis, in which he saw opportunities for positive change, catapulted Herb from his sick bed and into action.

New cabinet – new enthusiasm

> When the Sukiman cabinet resigned, there arose a hopeful sense of anticipation, anticipation of something that could set a new course.[62]

By the end of March the cabinet crisis was close to resolution, and it seemed likely that President Sukarno would finally approve a new cabinet. Yet his first attempt to get Sidik and Prawoto to form a cabinet failed. Sukarno turned to Wilopo, PNI member and Minister of Economic Affairs in the Sukiman cabinet. With Wilopo as Prime Minister, the new cabinet was announced on 4 April. It included Leimena and Roem, now friends of Herb and both ministers in the former cabinet.

At the peak of the crisis, in a letter to his parents Herb described the general sense of cynicism among the people, using this example: 'As one of our bus people always says very dramatically: "This isn't *demokrasi*; this is *demoralisasi*!"' Nevertheless, although aware of the despondency within society about its politics, in what was to become a pattern of his approach to his analysis of Indonesia, Herb saw opportunity in the chaos:

> As far as I can see the only way of breaking the crisis on the political level without resorting to authoritarian government, is by elections. For although they won't be the cure-all that some people here expect them to be, elections will certainly give the government authority and, what's perhaps more important, reduce the number and the irresponsible power of the political parties.[63]

Meanwhile, life in the Mustapha household was also far from peaceful. In early March Herb found himself deeply involved in family affairs when the Mustaphas attempted to adopt a local child. Herb felt uneasy about the arrangements, fearing that the infant's mother had been bullied by her husband and the Mustaphas into giving up the baby. Herb went to some lengths to track down the mother and discovered that his hunch was justified. He put the woman's case to the Mustaphas, pleading for time to allow her to consider her position. In the end the baby was returned to its mother. Herb was afraid that his actions would strain his relations with his hosts and that he would be asked to leave. Rather, the Mustaphas accepted and understood his intervention, and his place in the house and friendship with the family was unharmed.

Molly's role

Molly and Alit Bondan returned from a month-long visit to Australia, during which she visited Arthur and Lily in Melbourne, to find Herb very changed. On her arrival home she wrote to his parents:

> I thought Herb much better when I got back … as far as I'm concerned personally, I've dropped all theories about Herb's sickness deriving from any climactic [i.e. climatic] condition. Personally, I believe his trouble lies in over-stimulation mentally. I think it's quite true that he's often had as much argument in his old circles in Australia, and that the questions have been just as interesting in themselves. But it is also true that up here, things are not just 'matters being discussed' – they're events we're living through. And Herb is very sensitive to that sort of human implication as you know. Moreover, these discussions up here take place with all sorts of people, political leaders in a very real sense, that Herb wouldn't contact in such quantity or of such a calibre at home.[64]

Molly played a critical part in Herb's renewed drive. More than anyone perhaps, she recognised the difficulties Herb faced when confronted with the utopian attitudes of his colleagues about the fruits of modernisation and progress, of which they perceived Australia to be an excellent example. In their small section of Kempen, together Molly and Herb battled to counter some of these preconceived ideas:

> She loves shocking all our people [Kempen] at work by telling them that Australia's not the utopia that they think it is, that although lots of people have had a secondary education they're

not all intellectuals, and that they booze and talk about their £20 hats and don't live any the fuller a life for the fact of having refrigerators and washing machines. But of course, they don't believe her …[65]

Crucially, Molly recognised the need for Herb to unburden himself of a great deal of his Kempen work and focus on his studies and supported him in this among the senior staff. She agreed that when at work he should focus on his thesis research as much as possible. As a consequence, Herb's enthusiasm for his study intensified:

At present my curiosity is such that I'd like to do Indonesia study of some sort for years and years. Time and again it strikes me that while literally hundreds of historians are spending their time on tiny aspects of the English Revolution of 1640, scarcely anybody knows or cares about what's going on in this contemporary Indonesian revolution … And yet what a vast important consumingly interesting field of study this Indonesian Revolution is![66]

Herb's trip to Yogyakarta to monitor the local elections in September 1951, his observations of the dire need to end the political stalemate and conversations with Molly and various others finally led him to decide on his research focus:

… just *on* elections, elections as an aspect of the struggle for democracy in Indonesia. As I conceive of it now it'll mean a good bit of travelling about (since the problems are so different in different parts) and perhaps even a few weeks of living in a village … Part of the thesis will have to be historical,

> the traditional village head elections, the Dutch Volksraad elections, etc. And if by the time I go the Constituent Assembly elections still haven't been held (which is quite likely despite the present resolves of the government prompted by the Indian elections), then my thesis will be complete without them – and perhaps even of use in warning the government against possible causes of failure.[67]

Molly persuaded Roeslan and others at Kempen that Herb's thesis work on elections would be valuable to the Ministry and that he should be encouraged to focus on it above other things. Herb's work at Kempen took on a new level of focus and interest. He was given various tasks related in some way to elections, such as the compilation of a book of official documents related to elections – official statements, laws and regulations – for the documentation department. A commitment was also made to enable Herb to travel to other parts of Indonesia to observe elections. He had also started to formulate some 'general theories' about Indonesia's politics, seeing it in great part 'as a tension between two series of groups'. These he named the 'liberal socialists' (PSI, Masjumi; who were 'honest in the main') and the 'chauvinists' (PNI, opportunists).[68]

Back on the election trail

As Roeslan had promised, Herb was invited to join a Kempen team on a trip to Sulawesi in late March to observe local elections in the northern Minahasa province and to meet election officials in Makassar. As Herb described it, this was his first attempt at deep research since he had arrived, and he was excited about the prospects of what he would discover, not only for his own work but also for how it might inform debate and decision-making in

Jakarta. His observations about the way votes were tallied and reported at village level brought him to conclude that the process

> could cripple the attempt to get free voting almost as much as non-secrecy if such a system were used in the rest of Indonesia. And so the simple solution, as I see it, is just to count votes by sub-districts instead of villages. There are a few other suggestions I'll make to the Electoral Office people as a result of this experience, especially as regards the constitution of the village electoral committees.

Again, the extent of Herb's access and perceived, if not real, influence among the political elite is also apparent:

> Of course whether they're accepted will depend on political considerations, but I feel thrilled to think I'll perhaps be able to contribute something. What's more it's beaut that I'll probably be able to get the ear of the Ministers' concerned in this, the Home Minister my old friend Roem – Dahlan's uncle – and the Justice man, Lukman, whom I don't know yet but am likely to be able to approach through the Bondans' Socialist Party connections …[69]

The Sulawesi trip was Herb's first outside Java. As when he first caught sight of Java island from the *Surriento*, he was somewhat mesmerised by his first stop, Manado and the Minahasa people in northern Sulawesi. Herb also took his first flight, which he found to be an exhilarating experience, not only because he was airborne but also because of the symbolism of moving across the islands of the archipelago with such ease and speed, which enabled a sense of their union as a nation.

> Just to see the whole of Java under one's feet … I feel like I did when I used to draw maps all the time when I was about six, a tremendous, thrilling sense of power over time and space … Now we're over the Java Sea heading straight for Makassar. What a wonderful feeling to think that in two and a half hours we'll be there, in Sulawesi, almost in a new world.[70]

Herb's response to Minahasa was nothing short of wide-eyed affection, partly due to the good company he kept – a local Kempen delegation – and the beauty of the mountainous surroundings. A largely Christian population with a high rate of literacy and generally and comparatively affluent, Minahasa and its people, like the Ambonese, occupied a special position under the Dutch, with positions in the colonial public service and military. Upon his return to Jakarta in the article Herb wrote for *Indonesia Affairs* about this visit, although he waxed lyrical about the beauty of the people and the place, he also described this as a 'culture in crisis'. The cost of Westernisation – until now seen as a success – could yet, he warned, prove dangerous. Herb pointed to the seeming superficial maintenance of local traditions and customs and the obvious preference for Western or 'Hollywood' music and film, as a 'challenge to the social and moral basis of Minahasan life'.[71]

He moved on from observing local election processes in Manado with colleagues to meetings with Ministry of Information officials in Makassar, south Sulawesi, on his own, which he found a lot less appealing, describing it to his parents as 'the hard, and often almost dishonest, work of political "milking"'.[72] After the great excitement and near-exhilaration of his Minahasa visit he experienced, as he prepared to leave Makassar, what he described as 'a relapse into my old condition', which rendered him bedridden and delayed his return to Jakarta.

Gwenda and Ollie

> I'm feeling homesick these days – though a walk in the starlight usually cures me. When I think of you at my age Dad on that Isle of Man I realise that I don't know what its like to be away from home.[73]

Following Don Anderson's tour of Australia and the months of promotion, planning and hard work by the Australian committee, two new volunteers were set to join Herb in Jakarta in late June, with their status as VGS participants officially recognised. They were Gwenda Rodda, a chemistry graduate from Brisbane, and Ollie McMichael, an engineer from Sydney. Herb was largely responsible for finding them jobs at the Eijkman Scientific Research Institute and at the Ministry for Communication respectively and for arranging the conditions of their employment. The sourcing of jobs and living arrangements by resident volunteers for new ones continued to be a feature of the Scheme for many years, requiring great organisational effort and rapid learning of Indonesia's complex bureaucracy. In Australia, in spite of the Scheme's official status, securing visas was a challenge; Ollie McMichael received his just days before his departure.

Not surprisingly and despite his attempts to calm his excitement, Herb was literally giddy with anticipation in the week before Gwenda and Ollie arrived. In the days before Herb had seen a new doctor, Dr Slamet, whom he described to his parents as 'a nerve man'. His diagnosis again found that Herb's health problems were 'all psychological', and Slamet prescribed regular exercise and stricter planning of his workload.

Herb had arranged for all three of them to stay together for two weeks in the Rosins' house in Kebayoran while they were

away. They would have the place to themselves and would be free to become acquainted and talk over plans for the Scheme. It would be a soft landing for Gwen and Ollie before they headed into their respective government-provided accommodation. Some of Herb's first impressions of Ollie were to describe him as 'another mad Australian … very active … and interested in practically everything'. Herb warmed immediately to Ollie's enthusiasm for Asia and Asians, 'having practically lived with them for the past six months in Sydney' as a friend of some of the first Colombo Plan students. In Gwenda, Herb saw a different type of Australian: 'too many mad Australians wouldn't be any good … She is very much more a typical Australian … she's friendly and interested in things and will do good work and find herself friends.'[74]

In their first week in Jakarta Gwenda and Ollie spent much of their time travelling to and from the port in search of their luggage and orienting themselves in the city. Knowing his physical and health limits by now, Herb found others to accompany them on these expeditions, but at home at the Rosins he was in his element as he introduced the new volunteers to Indonesia 'by long talks'.[75] The Australians were quickly confronted, as Herb had been, with the poverty in Jakarta. One evening at the end of their first week, Gwenda and Ollie ventured out with Herb to find some dinner at a street vendor. There they noticed a very small baby, the child of the vendor, who appeared to be extremely ill. Herb enquired about the baby and discovered she was ten months old and had been unwell for some time. He expressed his concern to the parents and urged them to take the child to hospital. As yet only able to speak very little Indonesian, Gwenda and Ollie stood by as Herb implored the parents to seek medical help. He explained to them that hospital services were free. Eventually he persuaded them to allow him to go to the hospital with the baby and its mother.

As the child's parents did not have access to a telephone, Herb left his contact details with the hospital, who called him the next day with a diagnosis of hereditary syphilis. He later reported on the baby's condition: 'It's a much happier prospect. The child had hope, but not very much. Oh it's terrible. This is the 40% of children who die under one year in Djakarta. And alas, it's taken so much as a normal occurrence – not only by the hospital staff but also by the mother.'[76]

In the middle of his negotiations with the baby's parents at their stall, Herb was, Gwenda recalled in her account of the incident, quite suddenly overcome. He excused himself, walked a few metres away and lay down on the ground. Unaware of Herb's bouts of extreme lethargy and exhaustion, Ollie and Gwenda were unsure what to do. Did he need help? Was he also ill? After ten minutes or so Herb stood up and returned to the stall, where he continued his conversation with the child's parents, eventually persuading them to let him help. When under stress and facing extreme lethargy, this was a method Herb had learnt to use and would do for the rest of his life. As he wrote his father a few months after this incident, '… the cause can only be what you, Dad, said, that like you I take responsibility too seriously.'[77]

By the end of July and Herb's first year in Indonesia, Gwenda and Ollie were both happily settled in their accommodation, and the three saw each other several times a week when they could. Gwenda and Herb went swimming together and paid regular visits to Ollie at his mess near the airport where he was working. Gwenda and Ollie were quick to realise the scale of Herb's burden of Scheme-related work over the past year and enthusiastically offered to assume most of it. It was agreed that together they would write a report for prospective volunteers after which 'I shall be fading into the background in all this organisational

business, for Gwenda and Ollie are very capable and willing to take it over'.[78] As Herb had hoped, the volunteers formed a strong friendship almost immediately, a 'sense of belonging' or 'family' as Herb described it, which, Betty Feith wrote years later, was to be characteristic of the VGS. 'The coherence of this group did not depend on personal friendship or choice of companions – just as brothers and sisters cannot choose their siblings … Its coherence depended more on mutual acceptance of their interdependence in this strange environment.'[79]

Herb was reluctant to leave the Rosin household. More and more he found there a familiar European sensibility: a German-speaking household where dinner conversation included issues of politics, philosophy and religion. He often pointed out similarities to his parents: 'When Mr Rosin saw how much I liked it he went on to read all sorts of Mattaeu Claudius poems! You can imagine how much I felt at home!'[80] He was biding his time until a new boarding opportunity came up. Several false starts had variously promised a berth with Jakarta's mayor and with the Minister for Religion. With no new leads on the housing front and with the burden of the Scheme responsibilities shifted from his shoulders, Herb decided to take his first real holiday since he arrived. Always eager to get out of the city with which he now had a love–hate relationship, Herb planned a trip to Bandung in West Java.

Surrounded by mountains, Bandung had been favoured by the Dutch seeking cooler climes. With contacts provided by Tina Franz and with a letter of introduction, Herb arrived on the doorstep of a Dutch–Irish missionary family, the Arps. They had lived in Bandung for twenty-six years and had been interned during the Occupation. The Arps were dedicated to their brand of mission work, which involved 'experimenting with new methods … that is just talking to educated Moslems and Javanists – about

everything and last of all religion'.[81] They welcomed the traveller into their home. Once again, Herb was immediately at home in the European sensibility of the Arps household. Mrs Arps was a Quaker, which immediately raised her in Herb's estimation. He admired their commitment not only to their religious work but to Indonesia, too.

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Back in Jakarta a few weeks later Herb was immediately thrown into the rough and tumble of politics and again disappointed by news that national elections had been postponed yet again. The postponement constituted a serious setback for research plans, but he busied himself instead with 'attempts to get a grip on the political situation generally'.[82] Herb paid regular visits to his journalist and student friends from whom he garnered a great deal of political gossip and inside information on the daily machinations within the political parties and power struggles in the cabinet. Among those he was close to were students from the University of Indonesia, including the politically active student leader, history student and former member of the Tentara Peladjar (Student Army), a unit of Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), Nugroho Notosusanto.[83]

Very important to him as a source of intellectual exchange and insight at this time were his regular discussion groups, attended by artists, writers, members of parliament and civil servants, including Roeslan Abdulgani now and then. As Herb described them, these informal occasions allowed him to observe these political actors up close and get an insight into their 'outlook generally'. Very often he describes the parliamentarians and senior civil servants, including Roeslan, as 'too much the politician'[84] and

as game-players, inevitably comparing them unfavourably with Sjahrir's Socialist Party people to whom he was increasingly close. Major political conflict and near cataclysm in mid-October 1952 made Herb aware more than ever of the implications of his close association with individuals in the PSI and of his sympathy with its ideals.

The 'October 17 Affair'

In October a parliamentary row erupted when accusations were made that the PSI, through the Defence Minister, the Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX (considered a tacit PSI supporter), was 'pursuing a political policy in the army'.[85] The revolutionary and first Prime Minister, Sjahrir, was labelled a Dutch collaborator and the Sultan also 'pro-Dutch and a-national'[86] after a process to overhaul the armed forces, begun in 1950, was accelerated. Two years earlier, the Sultan, as Minister, together with the Commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic (ABRI) Major-General T.B. Simatupang and Army Chief of Staff Colonel A.H. Nasution, had set in train plans to fashion a professional and cohesive army from a heterogeneous body of soldiers, which included former members of the revolutionary army, who were by and large not professionally trained or educated; pro-revolution soldiers and officers of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL); and others who had trained during the Japanese Occupation as Pembela Tanah Air (PETA). By 1952 much of the work had already been done, although not without protest, and, following the demobilisation of many soldiers, the army was a much smaller and more integrated institution. In October, as the economy slowed and budgets were trimmed further, the process was accelerated and a further 80 000 of the army's 200 000 soldiers and

officers were identified for demobilisation.[87] These were soldiers and officers trained under PETA and those who had joined the revolutionary army with little formal training or education.

These demobilisation plans were widely seen as disrespectful of the revolutionary morale that had been so influential in defeating the Dutch and as elitist in its demand for certain educational qualifications. In such a charged atmosphere, parliamentary critics of the demobilisation and reorganisation policy accused the military leadership and Defence Ministry of being a PSI stronghold with the aim of positioning themselves to stage a combined army and PSI coup. The demobilisation process was being carried out across the archipelago with varying degrees of success, and many of the criticisms aimed at the Ministry concerning maltreatment of soldiers and officers were valid. However, the political tension reached a new level as conspiracy theories about possible PSI-backed coups swirled and a smear campaign was launched directly against Sjahrir and Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX. The critics were mostly from what Herb had earlier called 'chauvinist'[88] and would later term 'mass leader' and 'opportunist' parties or factions, including the PKI, Murba (nationalist–communist), Masjumi and the PNI.[89]

On 17 October this attack on the PSI's influence in the army became an altogether larger and more sinister project aimed at destabilising the Wilopo cabinet. Herb wrote to his parents about the crisis: '… parliament on Thursday passed a no-confidence motion in the government, and … on Friday there was a big demonstration which led the army to take all sorts of drastic steps, curfew, 24-hour arrests of politicians and bans on papers, putting phones temporarily out of action, and so on …'[90]

That day Herb found himself in the middle of street demonstrations against the no-confidence motion yet, as he wrote some

days later, he was still unsure how or by whom it was started. Then, almost as quickly as it had begun, the crisis abated due largely to Sukarno's deft handling of the situation.[91] The curfew lasted only until Saturday, and those members of parliament arrested (mostly anti-socialist people) were released. The cabinet carried on after the parliament agreed to withdraw their no-confidence motion and to take an indefinite break. Or, as Herb put it, 'Parliament, having had their coffee room chairs broken by the demonstrators, won't meet until further notice.' While he saw the slightly farcical comedic nature of the affair, Herb understood its critical importance, which he observed to be 'very revealing of the nature of party conflict'.[92]

The events also heightened Herb's awareness again that his position as foreigner and PSI sympathiser was problematic and potentially disruptive of his research and work roles. In the days leading up to the no-confidence motion and subsequent demonstrations, Herb realised how precarious his position was and his need for prudence: 'I asked my Socialist Party member neighbour Mr Nuh … whether he thought I should write an article on the whole affair. "That would be like Eisenhower receiving praise from Stalin," he said! So I won't be writing an article. Yes, the Socialist Party is often embarrassed by the support it gets from foreigners.'[93]

Herb realised that, for the sake of his work and research and in order to continue to guard his objectivity, it would be prudent for him to spread his contact base within political circles even more widely. He was also mindful of the need to manage his health by reducing his exposure to excitement and stress. He wrote his parents, 'Health's good – but I'm staying home today to keep myself out of the excitement for a day. In the office there's just too much to talk and argue and get worked up about.'[94]

New avenues

The crisis coincided with Herb's continuing search for suitable accommodation and reinforced the need for his choice to be carefully considered and strategically appropriate. As guests in the Bondan and Mustapha households in Kebayoran, he had been living among the 'lower rungs' of Indonesia's 'new bourgeois' society, of middle-level bureaucrats and party functionaries. In late October Herb was offered a place in the home of Harjoto, head of the government film company and a senior official in the Ministry of Information. As a senior bureaucrat Harjoto lived in a much more affluent area in Central Jakarta, on Jalan Banjumas, which for his parents' benefit Herb compared to Toorak or South Yarra in Melbourne. He had many reservations about leaving the genial and now homely atmosphere of Kebayoran, most of all about the moral tension involved: 'I don't like to be unable any longer to think and say that I'm here working and living as and with *ordinary* Indonesians. And I don't want to be robbed of the right to make moral condemnation of the nouveau riche elite.' Yet he cites convenience as his primary reason for the move: 'I'll be wonderfully close to everybody', which included work, Ollie and Gwenda, libraries and 'blessings of blessings, a phone!'[95]

But there was more to it than that. For some months Herb's aim had been to find a Masjumi household to board with. After exhausting all his Muslim contacts, his efforts had come to nought. Harjoto's offer came at the end of a long search. As well as being a senior bureaucrat, Harjoto was a member of the PNI and very well connected in political circles. PNI's influence in the Wilopo cabinet and in Kempen (the current Minister for Information was Arnold Mononutu, a PNI member) meant that this could also be an entrée to understanding more closely policy-making in his own ministry. Herb looked forward to the prospect of discussions

about film, nation-building and the whole commerce versus culture debate. A week after the 17 October demonstrations he moved to the home of Harjoto and his wife.

The recent crisis had a dramatic influence on Herb's research plans. He had become dismayed by the postponement of elections and started to plan for the eventuality that they wouldn't happen. He had started to seriously consider spending some months writing in Bandung then travelling to central Sumatra to observe their planned provincial elections. But now, once again his analytical gaze was turned to the centre of Indonesian politics. To the demonstrators on the streets of Jakarta on 17 October, Sukarno had again promised elections as soon as possible. Parliament and cabinet had almost come to a deadlock, which meant that 'decisions must be made – and changed – in the next few weeks. That means I must just wait. Plenty to do in the meantime.'[96]

Betty's visit

Betty arrived in Indonesia in mid-January 1953 for a two-week stay. Herb had planned her trip in detail. After a few days of introductions and meetings with Gwenda, Ollie and other Jakarta friends, and seeking an extension of Betty's visa beyond the five-day permit she had, they left Jakarta for the cooler and more relaxed Bandung to stay with the Arps family. This was Betty's first trip overseas; her experience in India had been as thrilling as she and Herb had anticipated. The pair had plenty of things to talk about. Their shared passion for the SCM, the Labor Party, good causes and, most of all, the VGS made theirs a full and exciting relationship. The positive reports he had received from his parents and Betty about each other had drawn Herb closer to her. All that remained was for Betty to experience Indonesia.

The couple had an intense and all too short reunion. Herb was now well practised in introducing people to Indonesia, but Betty had followed Herb's story intimately through eighteen months of descriptive and evocative letters and reports and found the place, people and its politics already familiar. Betty subscribed wholeheartedly to the ethos of the VGS and immediately fell for Indonesia. With Herb as her passionate guide and as their romance was rekindled, she found it beautiful, exciting and hopeful. It was a world away from teaching in Melbourne schools and from her heavy responsibilities at home. Betty's response to Indonesia helped Herb make up his mind about several plans and possibilities for their future. Foremost among these opportunities was a recent offer from Macmahon Ball of a three-year contract to work with him on a project to study social and political questions in Indonesia. But Herb continued to struggle with 'my old problem of whether I ought to be doing academic work or something else'.[97]

At the end of the first week of her stay, Herb proposed marriage and Betty accepted without hesitation. They would marry when Herb returned to Melbourne in the middle of the year. He would finish his Masters thesis, and they would then return together to Indonesia as volunteers. A shared future beginning as volunteers in Indonesia was their ideal. They both had a strong sense of their familial obligations and responsibilities, but now they could see their lives as a couple, as a family of their own. Announcing the engagement to his parents, Herb was euphoric: '… so harmoniously and ecstatically have we lived together since we decided. The worry and fear has left us completely … even the fact that Betty is leaving me now isn't worrying or depressing, because of this wonderful sense of permanency that our love for one another has now got.'[98]

Such was the joy of Betty's visit that neither of them wanted it to end. When Betty came to leave, she had overstayed her visa by several days, even though she had extended it. It took Herb's best bureaucratic know-how and negotiating skill to counter the customs authority's threats of reprisal at the airport. When Betty finally boarded her plane, they were both exhausted and overwhelmed by the last-minute panic and rushed farewells, but their commitment was firm and their plans were made. Before that next step, however, Herb knew he had to fulfil a still missing and nagging element in his Indonesian experience.

Desa living

Herb's Indonesia experience had so far been overwhelmingly Jakarta-centred. Although he had travelled outside Jakarta, he had a lingering yearning to visit the villages for an extended period and was more determined than ever to do so. Herb's observations of the *desa* had also triggered an old compulsion:

> A man carrying a huge load of charcoal, walking six days and a good part of the six nights for a total of six rupiahs; an old woman earning three rupiahs for five days' work on batik cloth! Oh dear me, my feelings have been a bit like when I first began collecting [for war relief] six years ago. The trouble is that one's often so shocked that one's immune to shock, so terrified at the size of the problem that one backs away from the tiny amount one could do about it.[99]

As his term at Kempen drew to a close, Herb was aware that his understanding of Indonesia was mostly an urban one, influenced by what he termed the 'paternalistic' attitudes of many in the

central bureaucracy. After months of negotiation with his Ministry of Information, the Ministry of the Interior and other sectors of the bureaucracy, he was given leave to stay in a village. His colleagues simply could not understand why he would want to live in a village where all he would eat would be rice and where there would be no electric light; to his colleagues 'the idea of identification with the desa people [was] so entirely strange'.[100]

Eventually, he 'won [the] battle' and finally set out for his *desa* in March 1953. The village stay meant delaying his return to Australia and, although he longed to see his loved ones, he explained to them that this opportunity could not be missed. In February Herb explained to Betty, his parents and his aunt why he was delaying his return:

> I don't think I should come home immediately, because I've now been given the chance to do a couple of months of village living before I go … I'd been thinking about it in general terms for quite some time … I should go to a desa near Yogja first, for about a month … because there have already been elections there, because it's a very poor and overpopulated area and hence interesting, because it's an area where the rural changes of the revolution are most marked and because Indonesian is widely understood there … This sort of village living will do a lot to give me an understanding of the whole economic situation too, and of course of family, customs, religion and so on. Being otherwise confined to Djakarta, this sort of thing is all the more necessary for me …[101]

As the reaction of his Kempen colleagues showed, Herb's request to the Indonesian authorities was an unusual one. Very few Dutch researchers ventured into the villages in this manner. It

is probable that Herb's interest in exploring village life peaked when he had contact with a team of American researchers from Harvard University's Social Relations Department, which included Clifford and Hildred Geertz, who lived in a village in Central Java from 1952. Geertz has described the great difficulty his team had getting permission to live in the village and to do so without strict supervision in 'an anthropological white room'.[102]

As Herb waited in Yogyakarta for the Ministry of the Interior to approve his village stay, he had the opportunity for further long discussions with these American scholars. When arrangements for him to stay in the village of Godean fell through, he asked their opinion about another opportunity to the west of the city. They advised him against it: 'after talking it over … I decided that that area wasn't suitable – too great poverty, not enough Indonesian, lack of even the smallest industry', and he decided to wait for something else. They exchanged ideas about approaches to studying Indonesia and often disagreed: '… they think me too nationalistic and I think them not human enough. But on the whole I get on very well with them, and am very lucky to be able to get to know and argue with people who will one day be top American specialists on Indonesia …'[103]

The process of finding him a village was repeatedly stalled and, although philosophical and as ever optimistic, Herb was frustrated by the delays. There is a keen sense in his letters that he simply could not leave Indonesia without this experience, that somehow his understanding of Indonesian people and their politics would be lacking if he did. After making many enquiries and following several leads to yet more dead ends, Herb met Pak Kromodihardjo, a locally elected official responsible for overseeing village prosperity from Pendoworedjo, in Kenteng district, about twenty-five kilometres southwest of Yogyakarta. Pa Kromo,

as Herb called him, invited him to stay with his family, and official approval was finally granted. Herb stayed in the village for two three-week periods, taking two weeks or so in the middle to return to Jakarta to study the newly drafted election legislation.

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Pendoworedjo is nestled in the foothills of a hilly, almost fluorescent, green landscape of rice paddies, channels and rivers. It was and is still an idyllic place, which, together with his accommodation with Pa Kromo, provided all that Herb could have hoped for from a *desa* living experience. In a letter home in April 1953, Herb described the attitude of the village people and their response to him:

> First of all, no anti-white feeling at all. Some people are a bit startled when they first see me – even so I can usually manage an exchange of smiles with complete strangers outside my desa … My host, dear old Pa Kromo, spoke of me and treated me as his own son. So did all his family. I was constantly invited around the place by people with whom I could exchange no more than a few words, to eat sweet potato and coconut sugar in smiles and silence.[104]

These warm relations led to easy conversation with those who spoke Indonesian and observation of the economic situation, political sentiment, of agriculture, land and labour relations. In another letter he commented, 'I think I've been able to make more worthwhile political observations in three days of such talk than I could in a month among the Djakarta politicians.'[105]

His immersion into the rural family life of the Kromo home,

although brief, was heartfelt and enduring. Herb took away from this experience a close relationship with Pa Kromo and his large family. Over the next fifty years Herb and Betty and their family went regularly to Pendoworedjo, and he would refer to them as his 'family' and '*desa*'. On a return visit a few years later he wrote,

> It's hard to know why I like it so very much. In good part it was because of those very loveable and wonderfully affectionate children. Although they are four years older very little seemed to have changed in our relationship. Only in the case of the eleven year old girls who are now fifteen year olds did the change strike me. But it's not only the children. Altogether it is so easy to love people and to be loved by them, it seems. I felt quite free from self-consciousness in the whole of my social relationships there, or at least from the type of self-consciousness which I normally feel. And there seemed to be something glorious about this freedom from self-consciousness and sophistication. Time and again I found the phrase 'children of nature' coming into my mind – and I don't mean that phrase in a condescending sense.[106]

The *desa* living experience, although only six weeks of Herb's life and a relatively small portion of his stay in Indonesia, was crucial in his perception of his continuing engagement with Indonesia. No longer was his relationship with Indonesia only about its politics and bureaucracy, or even about the volunteer's credo of being useful and doing some good. The experience gave him a close emotional connection with the people: a familial tie of sorts, which living in the city surrounded by bureaucrats and other foreigners had not allowed him to find. The relationship Herb forged between Indonesian and non-Indonesian, between

city-dweller and villager, was an unusual relationship at the time, as it is still today.

The village stay released Herb from the nagging sense that his Indonesia experience was incomplete and that his two years in Jakarta rubbing shoulders with political and bureaucratic elites and its urbanised and rapidly modernising residents did not fully represent the nation he was studying. Moreover, his weeks in the quiet of the village had allowed Herb time for reflection on his two years away from his parents, his friends and Betty. He returned to Jakarta and, soon after, to Melbourne, with sure plans for his future. Betty, Indonesia and the VGS were at its centre.

Cabinet crisis, April 1953

As Herb would write a few years later, 'The first five months of 1953 were a period of more than usually evident social unrest in Indonesia.' This disquiet was expressed through protest activities, including ethnic and regional protest, particularly in Sumatra and Sulawesi where anti-Jakarta and anti-Java sentiment was escalating. Herb saw the unrest as a product of Indonesia's recent tumultuous history: 'The social unrest was a product of the general situation of revolutionary aftermath – social dislocation, the rapid growth of white-collar life-style expectations, the existence of a large group of uprooted ex-revolutionaries … desiring participation in an expressive form of politics … [and the] high speed of social change.'[107]

Amid the general unrest, the long-awaited final drafts of the electoral bill were debated in great detail before becoming law on 4 April. Throughout this period, however, Wilopo's cabinet was increasingly paralysed by Masjumi–PNI tensions and its poor relationship with the army. As a consequence, social unrest and

violence had the potential to move beyond the control of the government. The cabinet was weakened to a point where it could no longer effectively govern and finally resigned in April 1953. The task of finding a replacement included four aborted attempts and took almost two months. Indonesian's fifth post-revolutionary cabinet, led by Ali Sastroamidjodjo from the PNI, was finally convened in July 1953.

On a personal level, there was further disruption for Herb. He returned to Jakarta from Central Java to find he had been removed from Harjoto's house and placed in new accommodation with a Kempen official. He was understandably annoyed that he had not been consulted or even informed of the move and could not help but compare the easygoing and community-based nature of village life with the increasingly disengaged life of Jakarta's bureaucratic and middle classes. In the end, the new lodgings proved adequate – the family had children, which was always a bonus for Herb (although he declared that he could not 'love' them as much as he did the *desa* kids) – and anyway, in a few weeks he would return to Melbourne. Before he departed in August, Herb received the critical assurance from Kempen that they would find a place for him in the Ministry when he returned in the following year.

FOUR

Engaging Indonesia (1953–56)

> The volunteer graduates try to live as Indonesians because they believe that men of different colours are really equal. They believe that merely talking about equality is not enough. There is no equality they say, unless the white man makes a determined effort to prove it.
>
> Ivan Southall, *Indonesia Face to Face*.

Herb arrived home in Melbourne in August 1953, to the relief of his parents and fiancée. His parents' disappointment arising from their misunderstanding that Herb might return with Betty in February had revealed the extent to which they, particularly Lily, were missing their only son. The further delay of his return caused by his decision to extend his stay in Central Java had not been easy for his loved ones to accept, even though they understood his reasons. Their disappointment had, however, been

softened on Betty's return by the announcement of their engagement, which caused a flurry of excitement and activity in both families. Herb and Betty had agreed that they should marry as soon after Herb's return to Melbourne as possible, as they hoped to return to Indonesia early in 1954. Their two weeks in Indonesia together, ending in the proposal and engagement, had left little time for discussions about the wedding itself. Although they had anticipated difficulties, given the different religious and cultural backgrounds of their two families, Herb and Betty underestimated the excitement the news would create back in Melbourne, and they did not grasp fully the challenges it would present for them all.

A wedding

One of the factors in Betty Evans's attraction to Herb Feith, in the first instance, was his difference. She described it as a touch of the exotic in post-war suburban Melbourne where she had grown up in a committed Methodist family, which had a clergyman in every generation. Betty's mother Ina was from a farming family of Cornish descent, the Shottens, from the northern Victorian town of Elmore. Ina won a scholarship to Methodist Ladies College in Hawthorn. When she completed her studies, she and her sister started their own business teaching speech and music in the Elmore area. As the four daughters grew to marrying age, however, it became clear that their prospects of finding suitable Methodist men locally were not good. In their small community Methodists were a minority, distinctive because they did not drink alcohol. It would be difficult to find in the district for four daughters husbands who were not related in some way. In the 1920s Ina's father sold his portion of the farm to his brother,

and the family moved to Camberwell in search of husbands.

Ina met her future husband on a tennis court, as Herb and Betty met twenty years later. Betty's parents married in 1929, and Betty, their first child, was born in 1931. Betty soon had a sister, Lorraine, and two brothers, Ray and Derek. The family attended church three times on Sundays and, by the time she was 14, Betty was a Sunday school instructor herself and a keen member of the church choir. Like her mother, Betty also attended Methodist Ladies College, where she was a member of the choir and enthusiastically joined clubs and societies, particularly those related to social justice. Her interest in social justice eventually led her to Herb and to exposure to an altogether different culture.

———

Soon after her return to Melbourne, Betty visited the Feiths, who warmly welcomed her as their future daughter-in-law. Together they agreed, with Herb's encouragement, to wait until Herb's return before they made decisions about the wedding. Ina Evans was also thrilled about the engagement. Herb had grown close to Betty's siblings, especially her younger brothers, after their father's tragic death.

Soon after her return home, despite their decision not to make plans until Herb was in Melbourne, questions about the wedding arrangements began to flow, and Ina Evans, more than the others perhaps, felt the need to commence preparations. Ina set to making arrangements, bookings for the luncheon and church. As she saw it, the schedules of the caterers, function rooms and of course, church, would fill quickly. In her husband's absence, Ina Evans keenly felt the responsibility to see that her eldest daughter had a proper wedding celebration. Social convention should

be followed, which meant that the organisation and expense fell to the bride's family. Given the financial stresses on Betty's family since her father's death and Betty's considerations about the relatively small number of possible guests on the Feith family's side, expenses were to be modest.

For the Feiths, whose wedding had been a small affair before a rabbi followed by a dinner for a few, these conventions were entirely foreign. Herb and Betty increasingly shared a principle of simplicity and non-materialism, which made them less than comfortable with Ina's plans. Nevertheless they were keen to allow Ina the excitement of planning such a happy event, after a horrible few years. In early March when news of Ina's plans for the wedding reached the Feiths, caught off-guard, they were overwhelmed by the speed with which hard and fast plans had been made, including the booking of a function venue and caterers. They saw the choice of location that was offered for the ceremony – either Queen's College chapel or the local Methodist church that Betty had attended since she was a child – as insensitive.

During his two-year separation from his parents Herb had been on a spiritual journey that had brought him as close as he would ever be to a Christian sensibility. Herb's revelations to his parents about his spiritual development were, however, guarded. Forced to read between the lines, Lily had expressed alarm on occasion about Herb's attraction to Christianity, but he always acted quickly to console and reassure her. Rather, his starkest revelations about his spiritual journey were confessed to his friends and to Betty – not to Arthur and Lily. Of course, Herb's parents were very aware of Betty's Christianity and, although upset by Ina Evans' assumption that she should plan for a church wedding, they could not have been surprised by it. Nevertheless,

Lily admitted that she still held hope for a compromise: 'I must tell you about a dream; I dreamt that you got married twice, once in church and once with Saenger [Rabbi Sanger of Temple Beth Israel], a real pipe-dream, but unfortunately impracticable.'[1]

In a letter later that month Lily asked Herb to think of them all as they sat down to celebrate Seder in the coming days: 'When you look at the full moon will you at least think of us, and of our exodus from Egypt?'[2] The letter did not reach Herb in Central Java until some weeks after the holy day. His reply to his mother is telling: 'Shame on me, I didn't think of Seder, or not till it was too late! I should have realised it when I saw the full moon, but I didn't.'[3]

Arthur and Lily thought highly of Betty and had grown close to her in Herb's absence. They had accepted her Christianity and the reality that Herb's would be a mixed marriage, although with some reluctance initially. Soon after their engagement Lily sent Herb a copy of a discussion of mixed and inter-marriage (where the non-Jewish member of the couple will convert) featured in the September 1952 edition of her synagogue's publication, *The Liberal Jewish Digest*. The four viewpoints expressed by rabbis and Jewish elders from Australia and the United States counselled against mixed marriage altogether and condoned inter-marriage only if absolutely necessary. Although Lily made no comment on the articles, the message would have been clear.

The decision about the location of the wedding ceremony, a key point of conflict between Arthur and Lily and Ina Evans, also emerged as divisive for Betty and Herb, much to their surprise. The long delays in mail reaching Herb in Jakarta and even worse delays in reaching him in Pendoworedjo, together with the fact that he was receiving different renditions and arguments from

his parents and from Betty, made Herb's position very difficult. Herb and Betty were keen to find a middle path towards compromise between the families, to allow for the accommodation of the cultural and religious sensitivities of both sides, and, in spite of the discomfort and no doubt because of quiet negotiations on the part of Betty and Lily, a compromise on the venue for the party was agreed. The ceremony took place on 29 December 1953 at South Camberwell Methodist Church with a reception following at Betty's mother's house. Any lingering tensions melted away as the stresses caused by Herb's absence dissipated.

Arthur and Lily invited Herb and Betty to live with them at Alma Road in the interim between the wedding and their departure for Indonesia. Their fondness for Betty had grown in Herb's absence. Nevertheless, disagreements over the wedding preparations indicated their concerns about the cultural differences between the two families, and for Betty and Herb, who would increasingly share the same world view, this brought their relationship under the greatest strain that it had endured so far. Nonetheless, it equipped them to negotiate around their families' future demands and expectations.

On the hustings

In addition to marrying Betty, Herb's Melbourne interlude was intended to allow him time to complete his Masters thesis, for which he had received a small scholarship from the University of Melbourne. Herb had hoped to write his thesis on the first Indonesian parliamentary election, which had still not been held, so he had settled finally on a study of the recently ousted Wilopo cabinet, Indonesia's fourth since 1949. The Wilopo cabinet, a coalition between the competing PNI and Masjumi parties, was

at its formation a cabinet of hope: hope that it would finally bring efficient government and, especially, the promised election. Just as Herb was preparing to leave Indonesia in June 1953, the tenuous coalition that held the Wilopo cabinet together had given way as the rival parties, including Nahdatul Ulama (NU), PKI and elements of the army, strengthened.

Herb arrived home in July with very little of the thesis written; plans to return to Jakarta early in 1954 would be delayed until it was completed the following June. Back in Melbourne, distractions from the task of thesis writing were plentiful, especially in his first six months. As well as getting married and reconnecting with Betty, his parents and friends, Herb threw himself into promoting the Volunteer Graduate Scheme. He travelled around Australia speaking to various student and political groups and at SCM conferences about the Scheme in Indonesia. In his address to an ALP branch meeting in May 1954, Herb delivered the message that 'We are part of Asia' but that there was 'too much fear of Asia … Not love or respect or interest'.[4]

At an SCM conference in Canberra in early 1954 Lindsay Cleland, a science graduate from the University of Adelaide, was among those captivated by Herb's reports about his work and life in Indonesia and about the potential for young Australian graduates to be of use to the new Indonesian nation. Cleland returned to Adelaide inspired to seek out a similar adventure and sense of purpose. He was to join the other volunteers in Indonesia a year later. Others were similarly inspired. Herb's oratory was filled with his passion and commitment to the VGS and, by now, to Indonesia, and it was becoming infectious.

In Melbourne, Macmahon Ball also put Herb to work on a different but entirely related project. The professor was in the

process of compiling a report for the University of Melbourne, recommending that it establish an Indonesian study program. Herb's task was to compile a report on the Indonesia-related research and teaching activities already being carried out by staff and students of the university. The list was not long, but Ball hoped that the University Board would see it as a committed start to be built upon. In his report, Herb mentioned the work of Dr Hans Leyser from the Faculty of Law, who lectured on Indonesian *adat* (customary) law in his comparative law course. In the Department of Political Science, Ball and Hugo Wolfsohn included lectures on Indonesia in their International Relations and Economic Planning in Southeast Asia courses. In the Schools of Economic Geography and History a small number of lectures on Indonesia were given in the general Economic Geography and Pacific History courses. Herb noted in his report the very few research materials held at the University, mostly comprising Dr Leyser's private collection of Dutch and Indonesian materials and a few pamphlets and periodicals held in the Political Science Department, but 'next to no materials in the History School libraries'.[5]

As for research on Indonesia, apart from Dr Leyser's then still preliminary interest in *adat*, Herb's Masters thesis, completed a few months later, was the only substantial research being undertaken. Submitted in mid-1954 with the title 'Political developments in Indonesia in the period of the Wilopo Cabinet, April 1952–June 1953', the thesis was the first major work by an Australian scholar on post-independence Indonesian politics. His experience as an embedded fieldworker, fluent in the language and comfortable in its culture, was likewise unique among Australian political scientists working on Southeast Asia in the early 1950s.

Going back

At no point during his twelve months in Melbourne did Herb and Betty lose sight of their desire to return to Indonesia. The need to complete his thesis before they could return did, however, cause some strain. Expecting that they would be leaving early in the year, Betty had not taken up a teaching position and, although Herb had some small income from Ball's research project and Betty did some occasional relief teaching, the newlyweds were largely reliant on his parents. The allure of Indonesia grew with each day, not only because it offered abundant opportunity to do something useful but also because it offered them a place of their own to start their life together.

The VGS committee's hard work over the past two years and Herb's recent national tour had aroused a lot of interest in the Scheme. Since Herb's return to Melbourne, more volunteers had arrived in Jakarta to work, including Allison Frankel, a pharmacist who was boarding with Gwenda, and Ian Doig, a chemical engineer. Betty and Herb were joined on their voyage back to Indonesia in July 1954 by history graduate Ailsa Thomson, a school friend of Betty's. Ailsa and Betty had jobs waiting for them with the Ministry of Education in its English Inspectorate section. Although Ailsa whole-heartedly embraced the volunteer commitment, she also had a personal motive for seeking her Indonesian experience. Engaged to be married to Zainu'ddin, an Indonesian Embassy staff member whom she had met when she was living in Canberra in the early 1950s, Ailsa was keen to get to know Indonesia, its language and people first hand and independently. When they arrived at Tanjung Priok Herb deftly navigated Betty, Ailsa and their belongings through the customs chaos and to their new home in central Jakarta.

Consolidating: Indonesia (1954–56)

Twelve months after he had left Indonesia, Herb found Jakarta in July 1954 an altogether more frenetic, sophisticated and modern city in the midst of 'vast unpredictable and amazingly rapid changes'. A large number of new buildings – mostly public buildings but also smaller homes – had emerged on the landscape. Herb was impressed, describing them in a letter home as 'quite staggering in both size and architectural style … Australia has very few that can compare with some of these.' His overall impression was of a growing middle class – more bicycles and betjaks, better roads, more students and 'university people' who were better dressed than before. But in the midst of the signs of improved prosperity and apparent national well-being, Herb's observations were tempered, 'realizing again with a gasp what a huge gulf lies between them and everyone else, it's hard to avoid the conclusion that it is a period of hardening of the new class situation created by the Revolution'. He was back in the field, and the rush of excitement he felt then would be repeated again and again whenever he returned to Indonesia for the rest of his life. Of the euphoria he felt on his arrival he wrote, 'It appears that we're all caught up in that initial thrill when one's mind ticks so much faster than ever in its attempt to observe the thousands of aspects of the situation'.[6]

Herb's desire to return to Indonesia as soon as possible arose from the ever-present promise of the general election, which he did not want to miss. There was, however, no need for the rush as the election was still more than twelve months away. The Ali Sastroamidjodjo government, which had come to power just before he left for Melbourne, was shaping up to be a cabinet of

some longevity in the context of Indonesia's post-revolutionary politics. Preparations for the long-awaited election were nonetheless underway; Kempen had run a massive public education campaign, and the voter registration process had commenced. The political parties' campaigning dominated the political scene to the extent that government administration was more frustratingly inefficient than ever, as Herb and his fellow volunteers were to discover.

Jalan Halimun 9

On their arrival at the port at Tanjung Priok, the Australians were greeted by already resident volunteers Gwenda Rodda and Ian Doig and a messenger sent by Molly Bondan with a note for Herb. Molly had found accommodation for Herb and Betty in a large house whose owners were currently in Europe. For the previous three months it had been occupied by an American couple, Donald E. Willmott and his wife, who had just departed for research in Semarang. The size of the house and its rent were considerable, so Molly recommended that they find someone to share it with. They immediately decided that Ailsa should take the extra room and, although the Department of Education had made arrangements for her to stay at a hostel, these were easily cancelled.

For the first three months of their stay in Jakarta, Herb, Betty and Ailsa resided in the large house, on Jalan Halimun in central Jakarta. The house belonged to the Soendoro family, in whose absence the young Australians had not only the house but also the household servants at their disposal. The relative grandeur of the house threatened to overwhelm them. With six large rooms, a piano and refrigerator, it was impressive by Australian standards and, by Jakarta standards, the height of luxury. However, although

initially ill at ease with some of its comforts, not the least of which were the servants, the Australians soon turned the situation to their advantage. The house on Jalan Halimun would bring Herb and Betty life-changing opportunity and life-long friendships.

Soon after their arrival, Herb wrote about the house in some detail, focusing especially on what he saw as its greatest asset – not its refrigerator and running water but its situation: '… in the middle of kampong country – half village, half city slum – where the majority of Djakarta's 3 million live. Right opposite our home are two large, pleasantly noisy schools, and I like to think of them as unifying these two worlds …'[7]

Djaelani and Entjah

It had taken Herb a year in Indonesia before he began to feel at ease with the presence of servants in the household. Herb's instinct on his first tour in Jakarta was to include the servants as he would his fellow residents and to make efforts to get to know them as friends. This was part of a conscious attempt at understanding not only the milieu of the politicians and civil servants but also the world of the urban poor and village-dwellers – of those on the margins. As he told a forum in Melbourne in May 1954, not long before his return to Indonesia, this meant 'brushing your own shoes and washing the dishes alongside the servants. It meant talking to betjak drivers and travelling third class on trains.'[8] It was also true to his own values and to the VGS egalitarian ethos and Christian teaching. But in 1951–53, because he was living largely as a guest in the homes of senior bureaucrats and parliamentarians, his behaviour towards the servants often made his hosts uncomfortable.

At Jalan Halimun, the young Australians and their occasional guests, also expatriates, were in no way restricted in their relations

with the household servants and were free to create friendships across the kitchen-dining room threshold. The house had two servants. Entjah, the cook, was a young divorced woman, and Djaelani did the gardening and other odd jobs around the house, on top of his morning job building roads. Djaelani was a literate young man and father, about the same age as Herb, whose family lived in a nearby slum. Both Entjah and Djaelani were ethnically Sundanese, originally from West Java.

Since his first contact with Indonesia Herb had struggled with the hierarchy within the middle-class Indonesian household and was critical of the way in which he believed his hosts had disregarded the suffering of the poor who lived, like Djaelani, in Jakarta's expanding slums. Now masters of their own house, here was an opportunity to give occupation, reward and therefore validation to the household staff. As Herb had explained to an ALP gathering in Melbourne a few months earlier, '[It is] the changeability of every situation, the fact that at every turn there is an opportunity to help in a way which however small appears in some way fundamental.'[9]

The new householders encouraged Entjah to use the electric light to sew by in her room at night, and they used the available tap water for their baths, thereby saving Djaelani the backbreaking task of hauling buckets from outside for the sake of saving a few rupiah. Djaelani and his young family would become a complement to Herb's *desa* family; examples of two vastly different Indonesian realities yet whose fortunes within the nation were inextricably linked. When Entjah collapsed with a potentially life-threatening gynaecological condition, Betty, Herb and Ailsa insisted she go to hospital and arranged for Djaelani's wife to take over her duties. Herb negotiated with the hospital, and it agreed to take Entjah as a patient, but only if he agreed to provide

a donation of his own blood, which was needed for her treatment. As Herb wrote, there were 'plenty of responsibilities connected with this mansion of ours'.[10]

The Australians visited Djaelani and his family, stopping to play football with the children. Herb and Djaelani carried out chores together, such as washing the household dog Bopi, and Betty took Indonesian lessons from him. When Ailsa finally decided that she and bicycle riding in Jakarta did not go well together, she gave the bike supplied by the Australian Embassy to Djaelani. The kindness and interest the three Australians showed in their servants was rare in Jakarta's middle-class households and in those of resident expatriates. Mindful that their time as masters of the house was limited, Djaelani, Entjah and the Australians very quickly began to talk about the possibility of leaving Jalan Halimun together. Echoing sentiments Herb expressed in Melbourne a few months before, he wrote, as early as September, 'We very much want to have servants as teachable and friendly as these, so that we can really do something to narrow the awful gap.'[11] Their goal was not a small one; they wanted to make lasting and positive changes.

Kahin

Because their Jalan Halimun house was so large, Herb, Betty and Ailsa were occasionally expected to host guests, including out-of-town public servants and overseas visitors. One who stayed with them for some time in October 1954 was George McT. Kahin, member of the newly established Southeast Asia Program at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and head of its Cornell Modern Indonesia Program (CMIP). For Herb the news of Kahin's coming visit was momentous. Since reading his book *Nationalism and Revolution*, Herb had viewed the American professor as

something of a guru, a role model for his own path towards scholarship. Herb first encountered Kahin's book early in 1953 when Roeslan Abdulgani asked him to read it and provide a summary so that Roeslan might write to Kahin to thank him for sending the book. For Herb the book was not only enlightening in terms of its content but also a source of personal inspiration. Kahin's book was an incisive and detailed analysis of the revolution and the early years of Indonesian nationalism. When he first read *Nationalism*, Herb wrote that it had posed 'a challenge to me to more solid academic work'.[12] A few months later, he borrowed the book again, this time from Cliff Geertz when they met again in central Java. 'I got a loan of that wonderful book of George Kahin's … It's truly magnificent. I'm reading now all the parts that I didn't get around to last time I'd borrowed the book, and am writing a book review … An amazing goldmine of information and for my taste the perfect combination of having sympathies and being objective …'[13] Herb's review of Kahin's book was among the tasks he completed in his first few months back in Melbourne in 1953 and was published in *Australian Outlook*.[14] By then Herb had focused and confirmed his own hopes for a scholarly future.

It is not known whether Kahin had read Herb's review before they met. In the early days of Kahin's stay at Jalan Halimun, Herb lamented that he had so little time to talk with him, so hectic was the schedule of Kahin's interviews with political leaders, including Sukarno, Hatta, Mohammad Natsir and Sjahrir, with whom he had been connected when he was in Indonesia during the revolution.[15] Once Kahin's schedule settled he was able to spend more time with his young, enthusiastic and intelligent hosts and to engage in long political yarns. Kahin offered to read Herb's Masters thesis and an article on the build-up to the elections that he had recently prepared for publication in *Pacific Affairs*.[16]

Another frequent American visitor to Jalan Halimun was Boyd Compton, a political scientist, with whom Herb had become friendly in Jakarta a few years earlier. Boyd was back in Indonesia for a research visit, which included a year in Modjokerto, East Java, studying the *kabupaten* system of local government. Jalan Halimun became a meeting place for these foreign visitors and for the other volunteer graduates, too; their conversations included Indonesia's latest political scandals and the state of the civil service.

Kahin's impression on Herb was deep, leaving him almost awestruck. In late October Herb described Kahin: 'He's 36, but looks younger … He's a "friend of the Quakers" and if you think of some Quaker types you're probably not far out. Quiet, genial, humble, idealistic, scholarly – none of those words are too good for him. A more easy-going person you couldn't imagine …'[17]

The good feeling and rapport among George, Herb and Betty led to the rapid development of a firm friendship based on their respect for knowledge and on their sympathetic world view. Kahin later recalled his impressions of their first meeting:

> … when I first met you and Bett in the fall of 1954 – the two things that initially most influenced me about you – other than your sensitive feel for Indonesian politics, were: (1) your enormous capacity to stow away rice (*more* than any Indonesians I met); and (2) your very natural and quite becoming egalitarianism in dealing with Djaelani the household servant (Bett too demonstrated that) …[18]

Work

When he returned to Kempen in July 1954, a familiar chaos greeted Herb, even though he had been expected. His old friends greeted him warmly and commented on the weight he had gained

in Australia. Herb, seeing these comments as much an admonition of the situation in Indonesia as a comment on his health, pondered on them, giving a further indication of the extent to which Indonesia superseded all other thoughts, including those about his own identity or ego.

His superiors had not yet decided where he should be put, although Herb's understanding was that he would hold a predominantly research-based position either at Kempen or with the Ministry of the Interior. After more than a week of deliberation among the bureaucratic apparatchiks (which Herb welcomed as time to allow him to find his feet), he was summoned to meet the head of Kempen's Interior section, Sutomo. It had been decided that Herb would move from Kempen's Foreign Affairs Section to its Interior Section. His status was now that of a researcher, and his task was to write a book on the national elections, and to write it in Indonesian. Sutomo promised Herb full access to materials in relation to the elections and to key personnel for interviews. Travel would be necessary and permitted. Herb was elated. The arrangements could not have been more perfect: to combine his Kempen work with his own research and study interest, the elections. The national elections were still more than twelve months away, but provincial elections were taking place and preparations were well underway for the larger event. Kempen's own public education campaign was in full swing.

Although he was very excited about his new task, Herb again recognised immediately the challenges he would face in carrying it out as a foreign student of Indonesian politics and civil servant. As ever, he was confident about overcoming them: 'Certain moral problems will no doubt arise, and I will probably have to say to myself quite a few times "Well as a government servant I cannot possibly be always true to my personal convictions", but on the

whole I think the two elements will be able to be confirmed without too much difficulty …'[19]

Although still at Kempen, Herb found the Interior Section less convivial than the Foreign Affairs Section. His immediate boss, Tedjo, struck Herb initially as arrogant and pompous. Moreover, he found the overall attitude of many of his new colleagues towards their work to be more 'narrowly propagandistic' and commented that generally the 'process of political polarisation had got much further' since he had left a year ago. It was now difficult, even for him, to avoid 'being thought on one side of the conflict'.[20] The impending elections had further politicised the daily work of government departments. Any new appointment was scrutinised and criticised for favouring one party or another; politically motivated appointments were commonplace. Herb was hopeful, as were many others in the administration, that the elections would result in a parliamentary majority for one of the parties and, consequently, stability and internal cohesion. If not, as he put it, 'the government service … [will] continue to be afflicted by the complex of diseases it now has'.[21]

Public service

His exposure to a different mood in his new section at Kempen and the experiences of the Australian graduate volunteers of the public service prompted Herb to write again of the difficulties within Indonesia's public administration. In a paper that was probably intended for future volunteers coming under the Graduate Employment Scheme– as the Volunteer Graduate Scheme had become known since the formal agreement between governments – in September 1954, Herb reflected on the historical origins of the current inefficiency, laziness, corruption and nepotism that volunteers encountered in their workplaces:

> … whatever the motive for entering the government service, it is usually not primarily financial … A great many employees regard their seven to two job with the government as a rest from the more strenuous work they do in the afternoon. There is any amount of coffee drinking and newspaper reading. One's purchases are made in office time … For middle and high ranking employees there is no detailed supervision of work.[22]

In their positions with the English Language Inspectorate in the Ministry of Education, Ailsa and Betty found similar inefficiency, a lack of motivation and ineffective management. In her weekly bulletins to family and friends, Ailsa described a system of 'inner' and 'outer' offices, one resenting the other. The heads of the English Language Inspectorate, Betty's and Ailsa's bosses, were Dr Fritz Wachendorff, 'a part Minangkabau Indonesian nationalist and linguist', and Jo Kuningrangat, a remarkable woman revolutionary with a Javanese aristocratic lineage.[23] From her vantage point within the inner office at the Inspectorate, Ailsa remarked on the striking inefficiencies:

> Wachendorff and Jo also work themselves to death, while the outer office members sleep in a lethargic coma … in this as in most government offices a vast scheme of outdoor relief is in operation with far too many office boys. When you visit a government office you are struck by the large number of people just sitting around the corridors. Occasionally they wrap a parcel or stick a few stamps in place. The rest of the time they just sit.[24]

The solution for this civil service malaise, laziness and tendency to corrupt practices lay initially in the need for salary increases.

However, as public service salaries in 1954 already comprised 52 per cent of government spending, increases were not a possibility, at least for as long as staffing levels remained so bloated. As Betty and Ailsa discovered at the English Language Inspectorate, there was simply nothing for many in lowly paid positions (the 'outer' office) to do; in contrast, their superiors (the 'inner' office) worked extremely hard and long hours. As Herb observed, there was a desperate need for an acceleration of the process of effective training for civil servants: 'Few trained administrators means bad organisation … slowness and lateness, jurisdictional overlapping and buck-shoving are all expressions of the same thing. Discontent and personal bickering naturally follow in their wake.'[25] As he had observed at the time of the October 17 Affair two years earlier, Herb understood that the lack of discipline and the inability to dismiss these large, inactive sections of the bureaucracy was because these people were owed for their services to the revolution and hence still had the power to disrupt the political process if they were offended.

Ironically, however, this culture of minimum supervision and responsibility aided Herb's own position at the Interior Section in Kempen. He was mostly free to decide on the structure of his work day. As he explained to Macmahon Ball in September, 'My time is my own except for a small routine job, the preparation of a fortnightly report on information activities for elections in the provinces.'[26] In the first six months he regularly visited election officials from the provincial to the *camat* (regional) and *lurah* (village) levels of government, questioning them on issues from the practicalities of forming the electoral roll and registration lists to the monitoring of political party campaigns.

Nonetheless, Herb was not immune to the political point-scoring and positioning within the civil service. Within weeks

of being handed his task, it was apparent that Sutomo, who had promised Herb full access to materials, was in fact 'politically suspicious' of him: '… he is fairly narrow in his ideas of popular information. He looks like wanting to keep a whole lot of political information out of my reach.' Undeterred, Herb was confident in his experience of overcoming barriers to access and had a strategy: 'perhaps when I start teaching his wife English his mistrust will decline',[27] he wrote. Indeed through Herb's daily English instruction with his direct superior, Tedjo, the two developed a friendship that made their working relationship a great deal more amiable. Herb, like Betty and many of the volunteer graduates, taught English to paying customers for extra money. In Herb's case, he used the advantage this gave him to court influential senior bureaucrats like Tedjo and Sutomo, a strategy that paid off.

Preparing for the elections

Since the foundation of the republic in 1949, successive governments had promised national elections. Following the experience of local elections in Central Java in 1951–52, the Wilopo cabinet had introduced legislation early in 1953 that provided for direct elections, contrary to earlier plans for an indirect electoral system. A system of proportional representation was proposed, and representatives for the Parliament (Lower House) and the Constituent Assembly (Upper House) would be elected concurrently. Herb observed the preparations for the election on his return to Jakarta:

> One of the first things that would strike you if you were to come into an Indonesian town or city at the present time is the large number of posters and banners in the streets. Many of them are posters of parties and other organisations asking you to go to their meetings and congresses. But perhaps the

> greatest number are put up by information offices of the government. Almost all are part of preparations for next year's elections for parliament and the Constitutional Assembly.[28]

Although Herb was critical of the inefficiency and lack of management that pervaded the cumbersome civil service, he nevertheless marvelled at the mammoth process that was drawing to a close in September 1954: that of registering and informing Indonesia's millions of voters about the election. The effort to register on the electoral roll everyone who was older than eighteen or younger but already married and to inform them of their voting rights in the democratic election of their nation's leaders was unprecedented. The process began at the village level where members of village electoral committees went from house to house registering occupants. Added to the arduous task of locating every person was the difficulty of figuring out who was eighteen or older in the first place. Herb explained: 'They might say they were born "when Hadji Achmad went to Mecca" or "when that mango tree was planted" and so it would be left to the two people there to register them, to work out just how old they are.'[29]

Kempen was charged with educating the people, two-thirds of whom were illiterate, about democracy and elections. They did this mostly through showing films on outdoor screens in villages, towns and cities. Most popular and effective, however, were *wayang* (shadow puppet) performances coordinated by Kempen offices. These used local languages and performance styles to carry the message across the archipelago. An election song was learnt by every child and citizen within earshot of a radio. By the end of the registration period in September–October 1954, approximately 43 million people were enrolled to vote. The political parties also employed a great variety of campaigning methods, ranging

from mass meetings to theatre productions and the distribution of pamphlets and other ephemera that displayed their all-important party symbol prominently so that voters would recognise them on the ballot papers, which were to have the symbols rather the names of parties printed on them. Although they spread their campaigning resources across mass media at all levels, the parties focused their attentions on forming effective village-level networks and representation.

Future plans

By October, Herb and Betty were anxious for news about Herb's final grade on his Masters thesis. They were less concerned to know whether it had earned first- or second-class honours than with knowing whether it had passed because, once he had graduated, the Masters degree would give him a slight pay increase at Kempen. In his reply to his letter of enquiry, Macmahon Ball gave Herb the very good news that his thesis was awarded first-class honours, and offered him candidacy in the University of Melbourne's PhD program. Ball's congratulations and praise were not without qualification. In the same letter he cautioned that the thesis had in fact been for some time 'poised … perilously … on the line between a first and a 2A'. The difficulty, he explained, was that the thesis was more a political history than a political analysis: '… you had shied off several issues which were clamouring for a rather brutal sort of analysis'.[30] This sentiment was echoed by Dr Hans Leyser, who congratulated Herb on a first-class paper, but he also described it as 'reserved and cautious in its critical approach'.[31]

Macmahon Ball's offer to supervise his doctorate at Melbourne University was not unexpected and was what Herb had hoped for following their discussions in Melbourne. Ball agreed that Herb's

continuing work on the elections in Indonesia would make a fine topic, and his new research position within Kempen made it even more so. From the outset, however, Ball was concerned about challenges Herb would face in maintaining objectivity in his research: 'Possibly a … difficulty, though one that will not become acute until you start to write up your new material, is whether you could be quite uninhibited in what you write in view of your obligations to your department.'[32]

This concern, together with his examiners' comments about the lack of critical analysis in his Masters thesis, raised issues Herb had already begun to consider. He had no doubt about his capacity to maintain his objective focus as he served Kempen and the government of Indonesia, but other uncertainties about entering the University of Melbourne's doctoral program began to emerge.

Establishing a *pegawai* community

In her history of the Volunteer Graduate Scheme Betty Feith described the adoption of the Indonesian term *pegawai* (civil servant), not only as a name for the volunteers but also as an all-embracing term to capture the essence of their commitment in Indonesia.[33] In the second half of 1954 the Australian volunteers formed a still small but dynamic group that included Ian Doig, Betty, Herb, Ailsa and newly arrived scientist Harry Whitfield, who was working at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta. Allison Frankel and Gwenda Rodda were nearing the end of their terms. (Gwenda returned in 1956 for another two years, this time with the Health Department in Banjarmasin, Kalimantan.) Inspired to join the Scheme by a common ethos, the volunteers quickly developed a common way of being and living in Indonesia.

This group ethos was evident in early September 1954 when the volunteer graduates took a day trip to Bogor with a group of

expatriate Americans and some Indonesians from the English-language congregation of St Paul's Church, where they regularly worshipped. The Americans travelled together by car, whereas the Australians piled into a bus with the Indonesians. Ailsa Thomson, however, arrived at the meeting point before the others and, much to her dismay, found herself swept up by the Americans. The Americans brought with them an elaborate picnic, as Ailsa recalled: 'the Americans seemed to have brought everything else, except the refrigerator, with them – including tablecloths'.[34] In great contrast, indeed deliberately so, the volunteers unpacked their lunch. The Jalan Halimun residents had picked and washed banana leaves from their garden and wrapped in them a simple meal of rice and vegetables that Entjah had prepared the night before. For Herb and the other Australians, it was much more than a lunchtime snack; it symbolised an emerging style of behaviour and identity among the volunteer graduates: 'In true *pegawai* style we – Tommy [Ailsa Thomson], Ian as well as the two of us – brought out our rice and extras in banana leaves and ate it in our fingers, to the surprise of the Yanks and amusement of the Indonesians.'[35]

Such demonstrations of their lifestyle distinguished them from other foreigners working in Indonesia, and also defied the increasingly rigid class divisions that were becoming evident and rapidly replacing the revolutionary ethos of social equality as Jakarta modernised. Their outsider status made such behaviour a point of fun and interest for the Indonesians they worked with and met, but it also made it possible for them to rebel in this way against class divisions, whereas it might not have been possible for many of their Indonesian friends. The approach was entirely deliberate and strategic in its aims. In a report on the Scheme compiled in late 1954 on behalf of the volunteers then in Indonesia, Herb spelt out the importance of their behaviour:

> But more important perhaps is the fact that these young people assert by the way they live, that racial equality is real. By having natural and friendly relations with Indonesians on a basis of mutual respect, they help to do away with the colonial legacy of mistrust and misunderstanding, which to so large an extent continues to affect relations between coloured people and white.[36]

As Herb had been in 1951, each newly arrived Australian volunteer was inevitably, and perhaps necessarily, swept up in the spirit of Indonesian nationalism. Their volunteering ethos was based on idealism and on their belief in the opportunity they had to make history and contribute to the process of nation-building. If they were not Indonesian nationalists before they landed, the Australian volunteers of the 1950s became so very soon after their arrival in Indonesia. Indeed, as Herb had cautioned very early in his stay in Jakarta in 1951 and Betty explained later, belief in the nationalist cause should be a prerequisite for prospective graduate volunteers: 'I think too that you ought to have political idealism and interest in politics. Without that I doubt whether you'll be able to identify yourself at all with the young intellectual nationalists you'd be working with …'[37]

As Herb observed, with more clarity perhaps than he could of his own situation, Betty's response was no different. Herb wrote of their joining the Independence Day celebrations on 17 August 1954, noting Betty's euphoric and emotional response to witnessing the hoisting of the original 1945 flag. This was in contrast, he observed, to the response of many of their Indonesian friends, who saw it 'as a distraction from the bitter reality of the present situation'.[38]

Central to the *pegawai* ethos was their treatment of household servants as 'human beings' and equals who became 'firm

friends'.[39] At Jalan Halimun the Australians had introduced a day off for Djaelani and Entjah. Entjah's normal working week was for seven days from 4.30 in the morning until the family retired for the night; Djaelani, who also had a morning job, worked for the household from noon until midnight. As well as altering their duties slightly to make them less arduous and inhuman, Herb, Betty and Ailsa visited them at their homes and invited them on outings to the movies and the swimming pool. These attempts at such unconventional friendships were not without difficulty and embarrassment on both sides. On one occasion the five of them went to the local swimming pool, where Entjah was initially refused entry because she was barefoot. Once the Australians had protested sufficiently, she was allowed in, only to find that her swimming costume was not up to standard. The incident angered the Australians and caused discomfort for Entjah and for Djaelani, who recognised the inherent snobbery in the directives.[40] Although their attempts to breach the social, class and cultural gaps between them at home had resulted in close friendships, away from home it proved much more difficult.

New lodgings

In mid-November, as the time to leave Jalan Halimun for the returning Soendoro family approached, its current residents felt as though their own newly formed family was being ripped apart. Herb and Betty had found new lodgings in a pavilion or bungalow in the grounds of the home of Sumarmo, a senior bureaucrat in Kempen's Interior Section, an arrangement Herb described as 'quite accidental, but perhaps useful'.[41] This house was behind the house of Tobing, the Information Minister. Ailsa hadn't long to wait for Zainu'ddin to join her and until then lived in a small hotel. George Kahin also moved to a hotel.

As they had anticipated, leaving Djaelani and Entjah was particularly difficult. Herb described their sad parting: 'Entjah cried … and Djaelani in a masculine way expressed as strong a feeling. Their friendship has meant and continues to mean a great deal to us.'[42] Both servants asked that Herb and Betty take them to their new home and, although enquiries were made, their new host did not require extra staff. To mark their departure from Halimun 9, the Australians and Djaelani went with Entjah to her village for a farewell party.

Although they were no longer living in the same house, the relationships formed there continued to flourish. Herb and Betty met Djaelani when they needed help with shopping trips and other chores and called at the house to visit Entjah. Neither was happy, and both reported the return to difficult conditions and draconian rules under the Soendoros: no electric light for Entjah, no running the taps for water, no concern for their health and so on. Herb and Betty promised to write references if they chose to seek new work and continued to look for ways to help Djaelani and Entjah find employment elsewhere.

After a week at the cheap Shutte Raaff Hotel waiting for it to become available, Herb and Betty moved in mid-November to their pavilion at Jalan Teuku Umar, Central Jakarta. Again, the young couple were rapturous about their surroundings and accommodation; the simplicity and intimacy of the modest bungalow with veranda suited them much better than the six-roomed house on Jalan Halimun. Whereas Jalan Halimun had been central and close to kampong life and the clashing worlds of modernising Jakarta, which Herb had loved, the pavilion was separated from the street, tucked behind the Minister's and Sumarmo's houses on one of Jakarta's most exclusive streets. It was not surrounded by noisy, chatty neighbours and schoolchildren, but was secluded in

a garden of palms and shrubs. Sumarmo was acting head of the State Film Centre, the position held by Herb's former landlord, Harjoto. He lived alone with his five-year-old son, as his wife was in London studying midwifery. The household had two servants, who also attended to the Feiths' cleaning and washing.

As Herb described to his parents, the veranda immediately became the favourite aspect of his and Betty's new home:

> Well the room itself is five metres by three, with a large window in the right-hand wall and a large door stretching for almost the whole width of the room. But then, and this is perhaps the best part of everything, outside the door is a beautiful greenery veranda, perhaps two and a half metres by three, with a creeper ceiling and a beautiful display of pot plants on the sides.[43]

The pavilion in Sumarmo's garden was the first home Herb and Betty had to themselves and Herb described their new situation as 'honeymoon like'. The romantic theme continued when Ailsa and the newly returned Zainu'ddin were married on the veranda in a brief ceremony at which Herb officiated, speaking a few prayers and blessings before the couple set off to the registry office to make the union official.

Shortages

As they had at Jalan Halimun, Herb and Betty very quickly got to know the household staff, one of whom, Sus Tarsih, lived in a nearby kampong with her family. In December, Betty and Herb discovered that her eighteen-month-old son Bambang was ill and found, when they visited Sus at her home, that he had a serious vitamin deficiency. As the boy was undernourished and refusing

most sustenance except powdered milk, which due to rising prices and shortages of many goods, was difficult to get, Herb asked his parents to send some by airmail. Echoing his experience with the street vendors' sick baby in 1952, Herb wished that they could have done more and lamented his inability to bridge the gap of stark cultural difference: 'If only I'd been able to convince the girl to take the child to be admitted to hospital earlier! Instead she's talking about spells cast on the child by enemies of the family. And she's certainly not a stupid girl, Sus Tarsih, very far from it. Alas!'[44]

The powdered milk arrived by air two weeks later by which time Bambang was much better. There was, however, no shortage of children in need of the milk, Herb told his parents:

> The other boy in the same house, Slamet, an abandoned illegitimate whose foster-mother also often works here, is perhaps in even greater need. It's incredible what a difference the little amounts of powdered milk that we've given the kiddies have made. Yet in the five months we've been here the government hasn't managed to get a bit of it onto the market.[45]

Indonesia's political instability continued to contribute to economic uncertainty and rising inflation, which was having real impact on the cost of living for ordinary Indonesians. In the period 1954–56, the prices of basic foodstuffs in Jakarta increased by 52 per cent, the price of rice by 56 per cent.[46]

George Kahin's advice

By early November, Herb was in regular contact with Macmahon Ball about his offer to supervise his doctorate. Ball was extremely supportive and Herb honest about the extent to which he was

enticed by 'a suggestion made to me by George Kahin … to the effect that I should try to get to America for a couple of years' work in one of the Southeast Asia programs there'. Herb and Betty were torn between Kahin's as yet uncommitted offer, Herb's debt to Ball and their desire not to spend any more time away from their Melbourne families, especially Betty's mother. In his letter to Ball asking for his 'opinion on the matter', Herb suggests the possible compromise of a Melbourne PhD candidacy during which he spent some time in America. Ball's reply a few weeks later more or less confirmed Herb's decision: 'I think in view of your special field and interests a Cornell PhD would probably be more useful than one of ours, though in general I think the standard of our PhDs is higher than that of even the better American universities.'[47]

After leaving Jalan Halimun, Herb and Betty met George Kahin regularly. One evening in early December they returned from a dinner with him full of anticipation and bursting with the possibilities he had raised, perhaps because he was able to give a firmer commitment. Herb wrote to his parents almost immediately, 'we felt quite up in the air, and spent two beautiful hours on this wonderful veranda of ours just planning what we'd do from now on and how we'd divide our time'.[48] George was impressed by Herb's MA thesis, advising him to publish it, but not until after he had left Indonesia. Herb's work on the elections was shaping up to be unparalleled in terms of his access to materials, data and key political and administrative figures, and George recognised its potential. 'Both of us continue to be really inspired by the confidence that George Kahin seems to place in us. He's really taken my study subjects under his wing …'[49] Kahin had written to Ball as a courtesy telling him of his invitation to Herb and assuring him that Herb's absence from the Australian academy would

only be temporary and that his time at Cornell 'would equip him for his envisaged teaching career in Australia'.[50]

Herb's friendship with Kahin was integral in deciding his next step on the path to scholarship. Kahin demonstrated that it was possible to blend his passion for Indonesia with useful and critical observation of its contemporary political situation. However, although Kahin was excited about Herb's abilities and prospects, his offer to Herb and Betty to consider joining his fledgling Modern Indonesia Project at Cornell depended on Herb's securing funding from an external source. Kahin had good contacts with people at the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations who were very interested in giving scholarships for research into newly independent democratic states such as Indonesia. As Kahin put it later, 'the Ford Foundation's Board of Directors concluded that the United States was embarrassingly deficient in the knowledge necessary to understand political, economic and social conditions in much of post-war Asia'.[51] Herb was already aware of this American philanthropic interest in such research through his contact with the American team of researchers including the Geertzs, who were working in central Java. Their project was sponsored by such sources and formed part of a general push in the American social sciences to know the new post-colonial states better. Kahin's encounter with Herb benefited him, too. His own position as Director of the newly formed Southeast Asia Program at Cornell was supported by a Rockefeller grant, and the Ford Foundation funded the Modern Indonesia Project, which began in 1954.[52] Kahin knew that further funds were available for research if he could find suitable students and researchers to carry out the work.

Enthused by his December evening with George Kahin and buoyed by Ball's positive impressions about an American university

experience, Herb proposed that he enrol in the Melbourne PhD program on the understanding that it was simply in case an arrangement with Cornell did not eventuate. Ball was agreeable, and Herb enrolled to commence his candidacy in January 1955. In the end he did not need to take it up.

During the next few weeks Kahin advised Herb to expand his research to include another subject in addition to the elections. The ideas they tossed around included the trade union movement and people who lay politically somewhere between the PNI and the communists. The latter appealed most to Herb as he was confident about finding good informants through contacts he had met when living with Mustapha (a PNI man) in 1951–53. He made a preliminary attempt to look into these contacts a few weeks later and met PKI politician Hutomo Supardan, whom he knew through Mustapha. Herb also agreed with Kahin that some study outside Jakarta was important. He tentatively planned for a month each in *kabupaten* of comparable size in West Java and North Sumatra. Although he did not in the end add a second stream to his research, his plans to study elsewhere in Java did become a reality within the next twelve months.

The five prime ministers

In 1954 the world's political focus was on Asia, on conflicts in Korea and between French colonial forces and the nationalist Vietminh in Indochina. The battle of Dien Bien Phu in April caused the French to seek assistance from the United States, thereby increasing concern about the possibility of global conflict. A meeting in Geneva of the major parties involved in the Korean War was expanded to include discussion of the escalating conflict in Indochina. The French sought military support from the United States and Britain, which could mean a devastating bombing

campaign if the United States responded to their call. Meanwhile, the Vietminh were fighting with weapons supplied by China. If the Americans entered the war, observers feared that the Chinese might follow and the conflict could escalate to a third world war.[53]

Meanwhile, a meeting of five Asian leaders was underway in Colombo, Ceylon (later Sri Lanka), instigated by Prime Minister Sir John Kotawala. The meeting was convened so that, at a time of potential calamity in the region, the 'united voices of Asia be heard' in international forums. The five leaders, U Nu from Burma, Mohammad Ali from Pakistan, Nehru from India, Ali Sastroamidjodjo from Indonesia and Kotawala, were alarmed at their exclusion from the Geneva talks and by the recent formation of South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), whose membership of eight included only three Asian nations: the Philippines, Pakistan and Thailand. (The other members were the United States, Great Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand.) The Colombo Five, as they became known, were concerned about the possible escalation of the war in Indochina into a global conflict involving the Cold War powers. They focused their attention upon the question of where Asian nations stood in an increasingly polarised international political environment. Their discussions emphasised the broader issues of colonialism, decolonisation and international communism. By the conclusion of the meeting, Sastroamidjodjo had unanimous in-principle support for a conference of Asian and African nations affected by colonialism and its problems, to consider these concerns more widely.

The Colombo Five met at the Presidential Palace in Bogor on 28–30 December to discuss further the possibility of an Asia–Africa conference. As Roeslan Abdulgani, who was later elected Secretary to the Asia–Africa Conference, explains in his account of these negotiations, after some debate and deliberation of whom

to invite, especially whether to invite China and Israel, the five leaders agreed that the conference should be held in Indonesia in April 1955.[54]

On the final day of the Bogor conference, Herb, along with an estimated 200 000 people, attended a public meeting in the Bogor stadium addressed by the five leaders:

> Although none of them said anything remarkable – of course not in a 5–10 minute speech – it was a morning I'll remember for a long time. Partly that's because of Nehru, whose face, alarmingly aged and tired-looking, put tears into my eyes. Partly too because of Bung Karno's fascinating antics – he was showing off more than ever on this occasion. But above all it's because of the beaut atmosphere in the crowd.[55]

Herb was standing in an open-air section where the crowd battled to protect themselves from torrential rain: 'All of us were in it together and I felt really "one of the boys" – enjoying it all with an adolescent sense of abandon.' He was supportive of this small conference's agreement to hold a larger one in Bandung, West Java, in April, seeing it as a diplomatic coup for Indonesia that had the potential to enhance its international standing. On the other hand, in terms of domestic politics, which were his preoccupation, he believed it was largely a diversion from the ongoing internal chaos.

Domestic politics in the run-up to elections

Indonesian politics was indeed as precarious as ever. In Ali Sastroamidjodjo's government, appointed in July 1953, the country's largest party, Masjumi, was excluded from cabinet for the first time since the revolution. It was instead dominated by

PNI and included Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), in its most prominent cabinet role so far, and other smaller parties. This cabinet, like Sukiman's cabinet, was particularly close to the President.

Since the events of 17 October 1952, the third column in Indonesian politics – the army – had been divided and was therefore without real power. In late 1954, however, there were signs that the army was looking to reconcile and resume its position of influence in Indonesian politics. In November, Herb compared the political situation to the period following 17 October 1952, when disgruntled factions of the army and political parties brought the administration to a standstill and near-collapse. The army remained a largely unknown factor, attempting to increase its influence within the PNI and PKI, although only with limited success. The membership of PKI had recently grown: 'They claim a membership of 500 000 now – as compared with the 170 000 they claimed in April 1953.'[56] Herb's predictions in late November 1954 of a decisive move by the army were realised in February when it embarked on a process of reconciliation within its ranks, thus shifting the balance of political power once again.

Meanwhile, the government's popularity declined as inflation continued to rise and shortages became more acute. Shortages of basic necessities, such as milk powder, were increasing and the gap between the haves and the have-nots was widening. As economists later concluded, 'Inflation in Indonesia was the result … [of] a continued, though inconclusive, struggle for power … the consolidation of territorial claims, a system of civil service "patronage", and defence spending, financed primarily through government deficits.'[57] The Sastroamidjodjo cabinet was closer to Sukarno than to Vice President Hatta and, as Herb later observed, 'they paid less attention than their predecessors to the solution of practical administrative and economic problems', noting also that

they were not afraid of 'the consequences of inflation and loss of production'.[58] As part of the Indonesianisation or nationalisation of the economy, the government supported the takeover by indigenous business in areas where the Dutch and Chinese had remained dominant, such as rice milling, banking and shipping.

In August 1954 Indonesia launched the first military incursions into the remaining Dutch province, West Irian, in a step towards realising its national claim over the easternmost province of the former Netherlands Indies. There would be no commitment to long-term policy until after the elections, and the bitterness of electioneering put great pressure on the government and its agents and sharpened divisions within it. Meanwhile, this government failed to make any more headway than previous governments against continued resistance in West Java, South Sulawesi and Aceh where the Muslim rebel movement, Darul Islam, held sway.

Corruption scandals within the government and bureaucracy piled up. Sukarno's popularity among certain groups had diminished after he had taken a second wife, Heriati Hartini Suwondo, which, Herb observed, 'had drastic effects on the man's political position'.[59] *Time* Magazine saw the marriage as a blight on the progressive policies of his earlier leadership: 'Last week, upon Indonesia's bright-eyed women still fighting for monogamy, fell the crudest blow of all. They learned that their idol, President Sukarno, had secretly taken a second wife.'[60]

When he took office in April 1953, Ali Sastroamidjodjo had stressed his commitment to giving Indonesia a free and active foreign policy of non-alignment and international peace. In the midst of such uncertainty at home, the outcome of the Bogor meeting in late 1954 was therefore a much-needed boost not only for his international profile but also for his domestic standing.

Jim Webb's visit

Meanwhile the Graduate Employment Scheme continued to recruit volunteers in Australia, boosted by Herb's speaking tour in 1954, but also because of wider dissemination of the Scheme's message by the increasing numbers of volunteer graduates in Indonesia. The Scheme became a more substantial organisation with the appointment of Jim Webb as national coordinator to work with a committee headed by Don Anderson. Because the Scheme was NUAUS-affiliated, it was decided that Jim Webb would give some of his time as Vice-President of the NUAUS to this role. In 1955 the number of graduates working in Indonesia more than doubled when seven new arrivals brought the total number to twelve.

In January 1955 Jim Webb visited Jakarta to meet with representatives from various ministries to discuss job openings for the eager volunteers, who were doctors, teachers, economists, botanists and librarians. Herb and the other volunteers were impressed by Jim's access to key figures in the ministries and by his understanding of the administrative complexities involved. Although Herb took him around to meet some people, Jim managed largely on his own. He discovered that the demand for graduates to fill certain positions was such that he found himself turning down an offer from the Economic Affairs Ministry of a 50 per cent salary increase (above the standard salary scale) as an enticement, which was, of course, anathema to the ethos of the Scheme.

The educational focus in Australia was also beginning to reflect the widening interest in the Graduate Employment Scheme. At the University of Melbourne, Macmahon Ball, Hans Leyser and Jamie Mackie, who joined the History Department in 1955 after returning from Oxford, pushed for funding for teaching

and research on Indonesia. As a continuation of the research he had done for Ball a year earlier, Herb corresponded with Leyser and Ball about a possible Indonesia Centre or Project at Melbourne. He recommended they look to the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project as a model, quoting Boyd Compton 'who lectured in all American Universities where courses on Indonesia exist …' and recommended its program as the best. In May 1955 the Melbourne University academics' hard work would begin to show results when they received a £1500 grant for book-purchasing from the Rockefeller Foundation, in line with Herb's suggestion to focus on buying books to support teaching first and then research. A few months later in September, when the Federal Government announced Commonwealth grants for Indonesian and Malayan studies for Canberra University College, the University of Sydney and the University of Melbourne, their plans began to really fall into place.[61]

Herb's hectic schedule of Kempen work and Graduate Scheme business was brought to a sudden halt in late January 1955 when he was hospitalised with a serious throat infection that had caused a secondary infection in one of his testicles. The problem was treatable with high doses of penicillin and bed rest. Rather than being downcast about the state of his health, especially in his correspondence with his parents, Herb found relief in the chance to relax and take himself away from his busy world. 'In some ways really it's a blessing in disguise. Beaut to be able to catch up on the huge backlog of letters to be written, to read all over the place for a while and to have time to think …'[62] His comments reflect not only the constant demands that others made of Herb but also, more importantly, those he made of himself. Herb spent more than a week in the Dutch Catholic Tjikini hospital where his care and treatment was paid for from the Graduate Employment Scheme's

Emergency Fund administered by the Australian Embassy.

Meanwhile, Professor Macmahon Ball and Dr Hans Leyser were sending letters of alarm at Herb's sudden and unusual break in correspondence. When he wrote to them at the end of February, Herb simply referred to his 'three weeks of being sick'.[63] The hospital stay gave him the opportunity to recoup his energies in preparation for six extremely busy months leading up to the national election. The most immediate of his tasks, however, was at the Asia–Africa Conference for which he had been assigned to Molly Bondan's team of Information officers.

Asian–African Conference, Bandung, April 1955

> You have not gathered together in a world of peace and unity and cooperation. Great chasms yawn between nations and groups of nations. Our unhappy world is torn and tortured, and the peoples of all countries walk in fear lest the dogs of war are unchained again.
>
> Sukarno, 'Opening address, Asia–Africa Conference'.

Like most conference delegates, journalists and staffers who heard Sukarno's opening address (written in large part by Sukarno's English speech writer, Tom Atkinson), to the assembly of twenty-nine nations from Asia and Africa and the Middle East, Herb was greatly impressed by the speech and by Sukarno's ever-powerful oratory. He was also impressed by Sukarno's call for unity among those now free of the shackles of colonialism yet still threatened by what he termed colonialism in 'modern dress', in the form of economic, intellectual and physical control.[64] The speech left Herb, who had for some time now been critical of Sukarno's leadership, feeling that 'idealism's not so silly, even in international politics', and he conceded the power of this speech

to influence: 'I was inclined to feel when I watched the assembled company this morning that it would be easy to underestimate the extent to which the sharing of a particular attitude towards the West could bring people together.'[65]

Molly Bondan's team from Kempen had the task of issuing a bulletin of twelve to sixteen pages each morning reporting on the previous day's debates. As Herb explained: 'The idea is to get news in the morning, write it up in the afternoon and work til eleven (each one of us) … in the final proof-reading and setting.' Although in theory the work allowed him unfettered access to all the sessions of the conference, the reality was that he most probably attended very little. '[W]e are kept so busy by our job … and so much tied to the printery where we worked, that what I know is only a tiny part of what happened at Bandung.' However, Herb's inclination to the periphery of politics, its gossip and rumour mills, outside these official forums was also very well catered for. As Herb explained, 'But on the other hand the stories were circulating in such profusion that I couldn't help finding out quite a lot. Every time I went across the road to the press-room of the main conference building I would talk to half a dozen people there about the latest gossip.'[66]

In addition to government representatives, more than 700 journalists and observers attended the conference. Among the large number of Indonesian administrative personnel running the conference were many of Herb's friends, some of whom he had trained when he was in the Foreign Affairs Section of Kempen. Other friends present included the Americans Boyd Compton, George Kahin and Winburn Thomas, and Australian professor C.P. Fitzgerald and John Burton. Herb shared gossip with American journalist James Michener and 'top German Communist in the twenties', author Ruth Fischer. The atmosphere among

these people was Herb's ideal, 'very much of the University caf at Melbourne'. Herb found his expectations about the organisation of the conference, set as they were within the context of his experience in the Indonesian public service, pleasantly surpassed. The atmosphere of the conference as a whole was convivial and peaceful, which was aided, Herb reflected, by the 'greater sense of freedom in the city' of Bandung.[67]

He described the aims of the conference as 'essentially … an attempt by the neutralist powers, India, Burma and Indonesia (sensibly in association with the much more pro-American states, Pakistan and Ceylon) to apply its own ideas of the way in which Asia (and Africa) can contribute towards lessening world tensions'.[68]

At the conclusion of the conference on 24 April, a day later than planned, and in the best attended session of the week, delegates announced they had reached a consensus on a communiqué or Dasa Sila Bandung (Ten Bandung Principles) with a declaration on world peace and cooperation at its core. Herb saw as the most important achievement of the conference as being far wider, rather in its 'role as a landmark in the history of Asia's attempts to make the West listen to it and care about it … If there was anyone in the West who came to understand a bit more of the importance of seeing the Asian–African situation partly at least in terms of Asian and African categories – and Asian and African hunger – then I'm glad that I had something to do with it.'[69] Indeed, the conference quickly won the attention of what had initially been a very circumspect and concerned West, particularly of the United States. Foreign correspondents reported favourably on the conference's avoidance of anti-Western and pro-communist extremism and on what the *New York Times* called its 'pattern of unbossed diversity' and role as a 'useful exercise in international relations'.[70]

That a strong united Asian voice about China and India did not emerge was a particular relief for the West.

The real and most effective work of this conference was done largely in the backrooms and in between formal sessions. Herb, like Kahin, was excited by the progress made in informal talks held, often in secret, especially those held by China's Zhou Enlai with the Colombo Five and others, including key players in the Indochina conflict. This was an approach that Kahin claimed 'certainly succeeded in creating sympathy for the Chinese regime'.[71] China's overtures to peace during the conference, particularly with regard to Taiwan (Formosa), led the *New York Times* of 25 April to conclude: 'Bandung parley ends in harmony; Foes of Reds gain'. On the second last day of the conference, Zhou Enlai offered to engage in talks with the United States on the Taiwan issue, adding, 'The Chinese people are friendly to the Americans. The Chinese people do not want to have war with the US of A.'[72] This offer was made when relations between the two powers, over the Taiwan issue in particular, were hostile. Three days earlier, on 21 April, in his 'Message to Congress on Foreign Aid', President Eisenhower had expressed his concern about the 'continuing threat of aggression and subversion in Asia' from Communist China.[73]

Although the overall evaluation of the conference was positive and self-congratulatory, one of its main architects, Nehru, quickly used words of caution: 'The effect of this achievement still is only potential.'[74] Massive economic, social and political problems in Asia and Africa still needed to be tackled. Personally, Herb was disappointed by the conference opposition, led by Pakistan, Indonesia and Middle Eastern states, to Israel's inclusion at Bandung. Nehru and U Nu had supported inviting Israel, and it was these two leaders who took a stand against 'that terrible decision of the conference against the proposal of two minutes

silence for Einstein'.[75] Nehru also had a message for Australia and New Zealand at the end of the conference, encouraging them to move closer to the nations of Asia and Africa, as 'they do not belong to Europe and certainly not to America'.[76]

East Java (21 May–June 1955)

In late May, endorsed by his Kempen superiors and advised by Kahin, Herb set out to observe the preparations for the election and campaigning by political parties at the *kabupaten* (district) level. Kempen sent Herb to East Java and assigned him a travelling companion for the expedition. By now this was a familiar procedure. An officer from the Surabaya Information Office, Supangat, was to accompany Herb for the first of his three weeks in the Ponorogo, Pantjitan and Kediri regencies. In each place appointments and introductions were made for him to meet the *bupati* (regent), prominent families in the area and election officials. It was Lebaran, the festive period following the fasting month of Ramadan, so there was no shortage of occasions for meeting people. Supangat was newly married and no doubt less than pleased to be sent on a hand-holding mission away from home during Lebaran.

The extent to which his sources were selected for him and his meetings deemed expedient by Kempen was something Herb was aware of when measuring the potential of his research. He commented: 'It's a strange and often frustrating arrangement this one of having another person constantly at your side.' Nonetheless, at the outset Herb hoped that his observations and interviews would provide him with valuable data: '… the signs are that I will be able to do a reasonably satisfactory study … the whole thing is getting more and more interesting all the time, and I really feel the study will be able to contribute something to understanding of Indonesia if it's properly done.'[77]

Once Supangat had returned home, Herb was reminded of the Indonesians' amazement when they encountered anyone travelling alone. Although Herb had his own reserves of experience and language to draw on, he reflected on his fortunate position as government employee and researcher once again: 'I can count on the help of the Penerangan people in any place that I go to, and that's a very big thing.'[78]

This trip reinforced Herb's sense that he was part of an expanding circle of researchers working to understand Indonesia better and communicate it to the rest of the world. As he travelled about East Java, he paid visits to fellow researchers in the field, including the Comptons in Modjokerto and Hildred and Clifford Geertz and their group of American sociologists and anthropologists working in Pare.

As he had in Pendoworejo in 1953, Herb relished the opportunity to get away from Jakarta and found great satisfaction and drew stores of energy from being in rural Java. Although Herb had always been a city-dweller, he and his family had always sought renewal in the countryside. The Feiths had taken regular trips into parks outside Vienna and later into the mountains of Victoria. In East Java Herb rediscovered the benefits of the countryside: 'It's beaut to be in the country for a change, to see bright stars at night, to have only one responsibility and not a welter of scattered ones as in Djakarta, to be able to sleep in a lot and read and think …'[79]

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In Jakarta, the political situation was again approaching crisis point and yet another cabinet collapse. Since the army's factions had been reconciled in February, Ali Sastroamidjodjo's cabinet

had begun to lose its tight grip, because of its closeness to Sukarno and the now strengthening balancing force of the army. The reunited and again powerful army expressed its dissatisfaction with Defence Ministry decisions, especially those related to its recent budget allocation.

Tension between the army and the cabinet came to a head on 27 June 1955, when the cabinet appointed a new Chief of Staff without consulting the army. The army boycotted the new chief's swearing-in ceremony. In addition to the growing tensions between the army and government, the public were increasingly frustrated by the rising inflation amidst frequent corruption scandals and conspicuous spending by their political leaders. Despite Sukarno's efforts to save the cabinet, it fell on 24 July, eight days short of its second anniversary. It had been Indonesia's longest serving post-revolutionary cabinet.[80]

Indonesia was once again without a working cabinet, and the national executive set about electing a formateur with sufficient support to form a new one yet again. This time Masjumi, sidelined in the previous PNI-dominated cabinet, emerged with the numbers to strike deals with smaller parties and form a cabinet led by Burhanuddin Harahap. It immediately set an agenda aimed at righting the wrongs of the previous cabinet, pledging to tackle corruption, hold down inflation and administer free and fair elections, scheduled to take place in just six weeks.

Arthur and Lily visit (June 1955)

While he was travelling in East Java, Herb had grown increasingly excited about his parents' forthcoming visit. The Feiths flew to Jakarta in mid-June and spent three weeks in Indonesia. Early

plans for a trip to Bali were put aside, and it was agreed that Java held sufficient interest to delight the tourists, who were after all much more attracted to mountains than to beaches. As there was no room for Arthur and Lily to stay with Herb and Betty, Molly Bondan offered to host his parents. The arrangement could not have suited them better. They had met in early 1952 when Molly was in Melbourne and were mutually enamoured. Molly's generous care and concern for Herb when he first came to Indonesia and her keen, practical and no-nonsense manner placed her high in their estimation.

Herb's parents visited Puncak in the mountains outside Jakarta and later travelled to Yogyakarta, Semarang and Bandung. In Jakarta Arthur and Lily revelled in their meetings with the volunteer graduates, most of whom they had already met in their roles as the first members of the then unofficial Pegawai Parents Committee. Arthur and Lily had become deeply involved in the Graduate Scheme, and their Alma Road home became a compulsory stop for volunteers and committee members passing through Melbourne on their way to or from Indonesia. The Graduate Scheme community became Arthur's and Lily's as much as it was Herb's and Betty's. Lily wrote in April 1956: 'You know Herb, how often I felt shy when meeting Australian people, but with your friends, specially the scheme ones, I am able to get a good contact very quickly.'[81] Betty confirmed this of her parents-in-law years later: 'You might say that if they had been unconsciously looking for an Australian group to fit into, this became it.'[82]

The Feiths' visit followed that of Gwenda Rodda's parents the previous year; Ailsa Zainu'ddin's would visit in the coming December. Through their letters and bulletins the young volunteers shared their Indonesia experiences with their supportive families. So detailed and frequent was their correspondence that

many of the parents would have found Indonesia an already familiar place.

In the preceding years through their extremely hard work and good business acumen, Arthur and Lily Feith had grown comfortably middle-class. Herb became aware of this shift when he arrived home in 1953, noticing the new car and furniture. Although it was difficult for Arthur and Lily to take time away from the business, which they lived and breathed, it was not difficult for them to make the decision to travel to Indonesia. His parents were keen travellers and were eager to learn about other cultures and places. Their visit also had a positive and lasting influence on Betty's already close relationship with her parents-in-law, especially with Lily. Fortuitously, Herb received official notification during their stay of his acceptance into the PhD program at Cornell University, to commence in mid-1957.

Meanwhile, in late July, George Kahin and Macmahon Ball met over lunch in London, to discuss Herb and, more particularly, his next steps towards becoming a first-class scholar and teacher of political science and Indonesian studies. Kahin reported to Herb that Macmahon Ball was indeed delighted at his Cornell PhD plan, and the two discussed the benefits he would bring upon his return to the Australian academy. The discussion dwelt on the very skills they expected Herb should acquire at Cornell, which they advised should include a good knowledge of American government.[83]

Egypt/Israel conflict and ideas of Jewishness

The weeks that Arthur and Lily spent in Jakarta and travelling with Betty and Herb in West and Central Java were characteristically filled with deep conversation about politics, philosophy and religion. It was their first experience of a Muslim country, and

the visit seemed to bring into even sharper focus for Arthur and Lily their own identities as Jews and refugees living in Australia. Arthur, a truly secular Jew, found himself explaining to Yogyakarta students of English the tragedy of the Jewish flight and Holocaust. Their visit coincided with an escalation of the conflict between the Egyptian and Israeli forces along the Egypt–Gaza border, which meant the Middle East was a topic of family conversation and reflection. The conflict sent a wave of fear of an all-out war, which was felt beyond Israel in Jewish communities around the world.

After they returned to Melbourne in July, the situation in Israel and the Middle East featured prominently in Herb's correspondence with his parents. Lily Feith attended public forums addressed by representatives of the United Israel Emergency Appeal and at Temple Beth Israel and made donations to the appeal. There was a spate of anti-Semitic diatribe and activities in parts of Melbourne. Arthur wrote to Herb in November, about a campaign against kosher slaughtering of animals led by a local Baptist minister:

> I cannot say whether this method is really more cruel, perhaps there is a justice in the opposition to it. But when such opposition is coupled with reference to 'Jewish finance' and 'powerful behind the scene influence' one gets suspicious. A leaflet, quoted in the 'Jewish News' culminates in the impudence of referring to Judaism (not to kosher killing) as 'superseded by a superior religion'.

A few weeks later Arthur wrote, 'For a Jew of our time it is very hard to be objective but one must admit that both parties in the dispute have a case. It is only natural that we stick up for the Jewish side.'[84]

In December, Lily put Herb in touch with the Israeli Consul in Sydney. The Consul, Zeev Dover, had written to the Feiths in Melbourne to enquire about Herb's work in Indonesia after reading about him in an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Lily replied on Herb's behalf, indicating her son's existing concerns about the situation in Israel. Dover replied: 'I must admit I feel not a little interested and a trifle intrigued by the fact that your son, a Jew holding office under the Indonesian Government, displays such evident and deep interest and concern in the State of Israel and its well-being.'[85] Indeed, in the past few months Herb had raised with his mother the possibility of doing something to present a pro-Israeli view to counter the pro-Arab view in Indonesia:

> The Israel situation is really terrible. Reading the recent pro-Arab statements of our government here, and knowing on what ignorance of the Israeli point of view they're most probably based, I wonder whether I couldn't do something perhaps when I'm talking to some of the Masjumi leaders I know. Not likely to have any effect of course, but perhaps I should try. Do you think you could let me have some material on recent Middle Eastern Affairs – present a pro-Israeli point of view – either 'new Statesman' cuttings or Zionist pamphlets.[86]

In Indonesia, Herb raised Israel in discussions with his PSI friends; it is not known if Dover pursued Herb's ideas about making approaches to certain politicians and journalists. Herb continued his contact with Dover and the two met when he returned from Indonesia in late 1956. The Consul's later correspondence with Herb shows his enthusiasm about their discussion:

> To come back to your suggestion of inviting overseas Indonesian journalists to visit Israel, could you perhaps suggest the names of a few top men who are unbiased and influential, indicating also the papers they write for, where they are posted and how they could best be contacted. All such information may be helpful and conducive to our endeavours to make Israel better known to the people of Indonesia, to foster better understanding and friendly relations.[87]

Indonesia, as a member of the Colombo group of non-aligned nations, led largely by Nehru, took a generally sympathetic, although benign, pro-Arab position on the Egypt–Israel issue, in keeping with the manifesto drawn up by the group at the Bandung conference.[88] Zeev Dover and Herb were perhaps conscious of the opportunities afforded by Nehru's reluctance to give in to Arab demands not to invite Israel to the Bandung conference, in terms of lobbying for support from the Colombo group at the United Nations and other international forums.

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Not long after Arthur and Lily returned to Melbourne, in July 1955, Herb and Betty moved to the newly built residential Teachers' College in Kebayoran. It was the first year of instruction for teachers and, as there were no second-year students in residence, there was room for boarders. For Betty the Kebayoran location was ideal as it was not far from her office. Herb and Betty found a wonderfully communal atmosphere there and formed good friendships with the Indonesian students. For Betty it also provided companionship while Herb was away observing elections in the provinces for much of October and November.

National elections 1955

> The elections … were regarded as a panacea and served as a device for the postponement and accumulation of expectations.
>
> Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 553.

By 29 September 1955 Indonesians were well prepared and, it was hoped, duly educated about the political system and the parties they had to choose from. As Herb commented proudly about the work of his ministry: 'Those untouched by its work must be few.'[89] Election Day, a Thursday, was deemed an unofficial holiday, and the streets of Jakarta were eerily empty of their regular busy morning traffic. At polling booths across the provinces women and men formed separate queues from very early in the morning to wait patiently for them to open at 6am. Even in the poorest areas women wore their best *kain* and *kebaya* as they waited with their children by their sides. The mood was festive but also almost reverential. Early that morning, as arranged, Winburn Thomas, an American minister working with the Indonesian arm of the World Council of Churches, and Norman Harper, visiting from the University of Melbourne's History Department, arrived in Thomas's large Ford to collect Ailsa and Zainu'ddin for a tour of polling booths in the greater Jakarta area. The Zainu'ddins were surprised to discover that Herb, the instigator of the expedition and for whom this was the most anticipated of days, was not with them.

In a cruel twist Herb was laid low, with a raging fever and unable to leave his bed. Because it was Election Day, Betty found it very difficult to find a doctor who would visit him at home. Eventually Dr Leimena called on Herb and diagnosed dengue

fever. After four years of waiting for the election, Herb would not attend a polling booth that day. No doubt deeply frustrated, he was forced to rely on his friends' and colleagues' observations of events. All was not lost, however. Delays in the distribution of ballot papers and in other administrative processes before the scheduled election date in some parts of the country and security disturbances in others meant in some provinces the election was to be held a few weeks later. With so much to energise him, Herb's recovery was relatively fast, and he was well enough to go to North Sumatra to observe the delayed election there. Moreover, the election season would continue for some time yet, as elections for the Constituent Assembly were to be held in mid-December.

In terms of organisation and procedure, the elections were an overwhelming success. Kempen's messages and those of the parties had indeed reached the people, with around 90 per cent turnout of registered voters on the day. Indeed, organisers were often overwhelmed by the numbers of people turning up at polling stations. Although not without some tension and some small-scale violence, the situation at polling stations was overwhelmingly calm. For most of Indonesia's population, who lived in its villages, voting in the election was, Herb observed, akin to a moral duty to the nation: '… a striking atmosphere prevailed. It continued to have awesome quasi-religious significance … everything was peaceful … an atmosphere like that of national celebration, serious but no longer tense.'[90]

Australia, the election and communist bogey

The Indonesian elections coincided with a meeting of Colombo Plan nations in Singapore, to which Australia sent its Minister of External Affairs, Richard Casey. There was growing alarm

and concern at recent skirmishes between British colonial forces in Malaya and bands of communist rebels. The election also coincided with a vote by the UN General Assembly to hold a discussion on the dispute between the Netherlands and Indonesia over New Guinea (also referred to as West Irian and West New Guinea). Since its foundation as a republic, Indonesia had made territorial claims to the province. Australia supported the Netherlands' claim, arguing for maintaining the status quo and mindful of its own role as colonial authority in neighbouring Papua New Guinea.[91]

In the few years since Indonesian independence, the bogey of communism and its threat from within Asia permeated Australian politics and coloured the view of the region as seen from the desks of politicians in Canberra and journalists in Singapore, Sydney and Melbourne. (The views of those in Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta and Port Moresby were rarely reported.) Australian media coverage of the Indonesian elections reflected the growing anxiety and the lack of direct reporting on the events. Inaccuracies and hyperbole circulated widely. Early reports carried in Australian newspapers after the polling booths closed heralded the apparent push for the Muslim and pro-West party Masjumi and triumphantly announced that the Communist Party was 'not the threat it had seemed to be', as the *Argus* put it on 1 October. A few days later on 5 October, however, when the lead in the vote count appeared to have shifted to the PNI, the *Argus* screamed: 'Indonesia poll is a shocker'. The policies of the PNI, the party of former Prime Minister Ali Sastroamidjodjo, it claimed, 'dovetail with those of the Indonesian communists'. On the same day, the *Age* agreed that the poll results reflected a 'Trend to the Left in Indonesian politics' and predicted that the PKI would form a coalition with the PNI to govern. The article went even further,

to imagine a scenario in which a strongly pro-communist government in Indonesia had direct links to Peking thereby comprising a 'potential menace' to Britain's bastions, Malaya, Singapore and the SEATO countries. In its editorial that day, the *Age* brought the national and international trends and the anxieties in Australia's foreign policy together: 'If the Nationalists win the current elections – and it seems probable that they will – the new Government of Indonesia will be less friendly to the white nations and more inclined to Communist influence than the old. Such neighbours in New Guinea could threaten the security of Australia's territories.' The editorial went on to express empathy for the Australian Government's continuing opposition to Indonesian claims on the New Guinea question: 'It is to our advantage that the Dutch remain in possession [of New Guinea]. They are old and stable friends, with no territorial claims. Indonesia, on the other hand, is unstable, unpredictable and "expansionist".'[92]

Arthur Feith kept Herb informed about the Australian media response: 'when you read the Melbourne Herald you would think that the Communists will take over after a short "Ali" coalition interlude …'[93] As Herb knew better than journalists in Melbourne and Sydney pulling columns off the wires, the situation was far more complex and the outcome of the election far from clear-cut. It was precisely this sort of misinformation and misreporting about Indonesia that Herb and the steadily increasing numbers of volunteers in the Graduate Employment Scheme sought to correct. Although not yet in a position to make his own contribution, Herb was later to make correcting such misunderstandings between the two nations a primary goal of his work. Now, however, there were other more pressing demands, both personal and professional, on his time.

The beginning of the end of parliamentary democracy

> Now the elections had come and gone. The actual experience of election day, especially the day of the first election of September 29, was memorable. Millions had had a sense of participation in national celebration of great scope. But what now? What of all the promised amelioration?
>
> Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 465.

As the counting proceeded it was soon apparent that no single party could claim a majority of the vote. Despite the early hysteria in the Australian press about a PNI victory with PKI backing, the final result saw PNI with a slight lead and no coalition with a clear majority. PNI had got 22.3 per cent of the vote, Masjumi 20.9 per cent, and most of the remainder was shared between NU 18.4 per cent and PKI 16.4 per cent.[94] The results of the election for the Constituent Assembly election in early December mirrored those of the parliamentary election. As Herb concluded, 'The electorate was given no clear "verdict", and therefore the leadership and composition of the new cabinet would depend in large measure on bargaining between the four main parties.'[95] A new cabinet would be formed when the newly elected parliament assembled in March. Meanwhile, the Burhanuddin cabinet was left with only a very narrow majority and dependent on the unreliable PNI-aligned NU and Partai Serikat Islam Indonesia (PSII) parties for this slim advantage.

During the next few months Herb completed his report on the elections for Kempen, which was due in March. The complexities of the election procedures, campaigns and outcomes, although considerable, did not feature in any significant way in Herb's report

for the Department of Information. As he explained to Kahin, Kempen's directive was that he write a book that was 'intelligible to anyone with a completed SMP [junior high school] education' and no more than 200 pages long.[96] As Herb settled down to complete his report for Kempen, which was a more limited and less challenging task than he had anticipated at the outset, he did so with the knowledge that a clear plan was in place for his immediate future. He was confident that he could give the deep and extensive research he had carried out in the preceding eighteen months a more critically engaged interpretation elsewhere. Kahin had confirmed the offer of a Cornell Fellowship for a year (August 1956–July 1957), during which Herb would return to Melbourne to write up his research on the elections for publication by the Modern Indonesia Project at Cornell, and would return to Indonesia from May to August to observe the regional elections in June 1957. Although it was expected that Herb would then take up his place in the PhD program at Cornell, the funding for his second and third years was still uncertain. As Kahin had made clear to him a year earlier, Herb's position would depend on finding his own outside funding. Although cautious in his commitment to Herb, Kahin was also extremely confident of a scholarship being granted to his protégé and had put his plan in motion.[97]

In addition to his writing assignment, Herb was offered a position as adviser to the Law Faculty at the University of Indonesia, although it is not known whether he took up the position or who made the offer. In March, Jamie Mackie finally arrived in Jakarta to take up a position with the Planning Bureau. Despite attempts to arrange Mackie's work in Indonesia under the Employment Scheme, in the end he went to Indonesia under the auspices of the Colombo Plan.

At the University of Melbourne, Mackie left behind a newly installed Indonesian-language program. Following the September 1955 commitment of federal funding for the establishment of Centres of Indonesian and Malay Studies, the search for appropriate personnel at the University of Melbourne had started in earnest. Herb had recommended Zainu'ddin to Mackie, Ball and Leyser. Norman Harper had been also charged with observing Zainu'ddin and reporting back to Macmahon Ball when he visited in September. In February 1956 Zainu'ddin returned to Australia with Ailsa and their baby daughter to start teaching the first Indonesian-language course at an Australian university.

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On 26 March 1956 Indonesia's elected parliament and the second cabinet of Ali Sastroamidjodjo, in a coalition led by PNI, with Masjumi and NU, were inaugurated. The parliament was characterised by the amount of new blood, as only a quarter of its members had sat in the previous parliament. Although the elections had been a significant achievement in their own right, the lack of a decisive victory by any party meant that governing would once again be a complex balancing act to maintain alliances and tenuous coalitions. The elections did not provide the stability the nation was hoping for because the centres of political and economic power remained outside the system, as Herb observed:

> The elections have distributed parliamentary strength in a way which does not accord with the reality of effective power relationships in Indonesia … they leave without parliamentary representation proportionate to their actual power, and so forced to assert this power in extra-parliamentary ways,

> such groups as the army, Chinese business interests and the army-veteran-business leaders of the strong exporting areas in Sumatra and Sulawesi …

Herb put the election success into perspective for his Western readership: 'The Indonesian parliament reflects the balance of actual political strengths in the country hardly more than the veto-less UN General Assembly reflects actual strengths in the world community. It changes this balance to a certain extent. But extra-parliamentary political bargaining continues to play a major role.'[98]

As Herb saw it, the long election campaign had aggravated party divisions and sharpened tensions, so much so that by the time the elections came around 'political bitterness had become extreme'.[99] In the face of competition from extra-parliamentary centres of power, the parties and politicians lost their moral legitimacy and authority to govern. As a consequence, Ali's cabinet was condemned as ineffective in its efforts to deal with Indonesia's administrative and economic problems. The status of politicians was at an all-time low; they were deemed selfish and estranged from the people and were loathed. There was a 'discrepancy between claimed authority and actual power'.[100] The real political contest was now on for the hearts and minds of the people – to establish who had the moral right to govern.

When they left Indonesia for Australia in August 1956, Betty was pregnant and Herb had a Cornell Fellowship to enable him to write up his research on the elections. The Indonesia they had arrived at two years earlier, expectant, hopeful and fully engaged in the party political process, was now disappointed and disillusioned, and on the brink of yet another major shift in its short life as a nation-state.

PART 3

FIVE

Cornell years (1957–60)

> What exactly was it that failed, that is the central question. All this is going to be very much in my thinking in the course of the next twelve months, for my thesis is going to involve these sorts of themes … More generally it will be a sort of attempt at a political history of the parliamentary period December 1949 to March 1957. It's all a bit vague so far …
>
> Herb Feith to David and Janet Penny, 21 September 1959

In their first weeks back in Melbourne Herb and Betty suffered severely from culture shock. Although much about Indonesia had caused Herb confusion and discomfort both times he had arrived there, his experiences of the country and society, on the whole, involved an immediate sense of acceptance, familiarity and friendliness. In August 1956 they found Melbourne altogether less welcoming. After a few weeks at home, though, they did begin

to notice some pleasing changes: 'Australia isn't quite as strange to us now, after just on three weeks. It certainly was strange at first. Quite striking is the increase in the awareness of Asia and particularly Indonesia. Of course Melbourne has about ten times the Indonesian population it had two years ago. Sixty now. And a number of encouraging signs of this sort.'[1]

They arrived home at a time of immense excitement as Melbourne prepared to host Australia's first Olympic Games. For internationalists like Herb and Betty and their friends, including returned volunteers from Indonesia, it was an opportunity to reciprocate their former hosts' hospitality. The Indonesian community in Melbourne was also growing, now including students, embassy staffers and Radio Australia broadcasters. The newly formed Australia Indonesian Association of Victoria (AIAV) included many returned volunteers including Ailsa Zainu'ddin and others active in the Graduate Employment Scheme, such as Don Anderson as Vice-President, Jim Webb, and Zainu'ddin, Ian Doig as committee members and Arthur Feith as honorary treasurer. Arthur held this position until the early 1960s and acted thereafter as its honorary auditor. During the Olympics AIAV members acted as liaisons for the Indonesian Olympic team, visiting them at the athletes' village in Heidelberg and hosting a welcoming party.

Herb had less than nine months to deliver his elections monograph to Kahin at Cornell. As political events in Indonesia moved swiftly on, the promise brought by the election success was quickly fading from national and international memory. There was increasing political uncertainty as rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi gained momentum, and in December Vice-President Hatta resigned in disgust at Sukarno's handling of the rebellions. Kahin pressed Herb to deliver his research as soon as possible so

that his analysis might better inform current thinking in the field. Indeed, this imperative became more acute as by now it seemed clear that his Kempen elections report had been more or less shelved back in Jakarta. Herb explained in April 1957 that it 'had been put aside – in typescript form – for future reference'.[2]

Herb and Betty's first child, David, was born amid great celebration by both families in Melbourne on 20 January 1957. Herb had a deep affection for children, as he had demonstrated by his closeness to Betty's brothers and to the children in the *desa* and kampongs in Indonesia. It was with these children in Pendoworedjo and the slums of Jakarta that Herb often associated his deep affection for Indonesia.

With Betty preoccupied with motherhood, Herb co-opted his parents to help with the final editing and typing of his monograph before sending it off to Kahin in early April. He also presented a series of lectures on Indonesian politics to students in Macmahon Ball's course at the University of Melbourne and found time to write a long piece on 'The political crisis in Indonesia' for the pamphlet *Australia's Neighbours*. Then in early May, Herb set off for Indonesia again, this time alone and by air for the first time. The trip was part of his research plan devised in consultation with George Kahin, and would allow him to follow the regional elections and carry out the last of his fieldwork before commencing his doctorate. Herb used a brief stop in Perth on the way to Jakarta to meet John Legge, an historian working on Indonesia at the University of Western Australia and recently returned from a term as Research Fellow at Cornell University. The plan was that Betty and David would meet Herb in Jakarta in three months time and together they would travel to America, taking a short holiday in Europe on the way.

Party politics collapses

By early 1957 a combination of their own bitter in-fighting and the increased dominance of the extra-parliamentary forces – Sukarno, the central leadership of the military and, on the sidelines, the regionalist movements and PKI – diminished the authority of the political parties in Indonesia. In March, as Herb made the final edits to his Elections monograph, the second Sastromidjodjo cabinet was in its last days and a systemic transition was underway. Herb wrote, '… what collapsed, though its collapse was by no means complete, was parliamentary democracy. Indeed, it was more; it was constitutional government.'[3] After stalled attempts to form a party-based cabinet, Sukarno appointed himself as formateur and, on 9 April 1957, named Dr Djuanda, Minister of State for Planning Affairs in the second Ali cabinet and a non-party figure, as his choice for Prime Minister.[4]

Indonesia was in a state of crisis as the army-backed rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi failed to respond to Sukarno's program of *konsepsi – demokrasi yang terpimpin* (guided democracy) and capitulate.[5] Herb arrived in Jakarta as Sukarno enacted an emergency law to establish a National Council (Dewan Nasional) under his chairmanship. The forty-four members – to be appointed by Sukarno himself in July – were representatives of functional groups in society, who were not party-aligned. As the cabinet understood it, their role would be simply an advisory one. However, the prestige of the Council with the President at its head 'weakened the constitutional status of cabinet and parliament'.[6] Moreover, together with the power held by the army leaders around its chief, Major-General Nasution, the political dynamic had irreversibly shifted, leaving the cabinet and parliament without legitimacy.

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Herb returned to Indonesia in May 1957 with some dread, but also with irrepressible hope. In the conclusion of the book he had completed a few weeks earlier, although he was under no illusion about the failure of the elections to fulfil the expectations of the people who had flocked to polling booths and cautioned about the power struggle now at play, he refused to discount the democratic path as a suitable one for Indonesia:

> For all these reasons the functions of elections in Indonesia must be seen in a different light from that in which they are seen in the West. But this does not mean that under Indonesian circumstances elections cannot be an effective part of a system of responsible government. Keen disappointment is felt in many Indonesian groups because the 1955 elections have not created political stability. But this could not properly be expected. Elections could not possibly be the panacea for Indonesia's political ills which many government and party propagandists claimed them to be. For the central features of Indonesia's political dynamics are left unchanged by the existence of an elected parliament. However, such a parliament, regarded as a first step in the nation's evolution as a democracy, represents an important achievement.[7]

In Indonesia, Herb was keen to collect missing data for his dissertation. This was to be his last chance for interviews and documentation searches before he settled down to write it. Cornell had one of the world's best reserves of Indonesian materials outside Indonesia at that time, and Herb's special access through Kempen would allow him to use government materials seen by very few

outsiders. Nonetheless, he still believed that his sources were incomplete. In the preface for the Wilopo monograph written in August 1958 he explained,

> I nevertheless found many types of information important to this study to be outside my reach. Partly for this reason … partly because of the nature of research on current developments anywhere, I have found time and again that my evidence is incomplete or not wholly reliable. Where this is the case I have, for the sake of the completeness of the monograph, included my own conjecture with and indication of the degree to which they can be relied upon.[8]

His main focus for the trip in 1957 was to observe regional and provincial elections in Java set for June and July and to monitor significant political developments since his departure ten months earlier. The period from mid-1956 until mid-1958 would, Herb later wrote, be a 'period of rapid political change' during which it became extremely difficult to predict with any accuracy how things would play out. There was a palpable sense that 'anything could happen now'.[9]

Although eager to get to his research, Herb's first priority upon arriving was to meet his old friends and colleagues. Djaelani's welcome was among the warmest, despite the fact that recent floods had destroyed his makeshift home and his fledgling tin recycling business. Since Betty and Herb's departure the previous July, Djaelani had established this small business while he continued his morning job on the roads. It had been a relief to Herb that his friend had this income stream to fall back on. When Herb called on him, Djaelani had managed to mostly rebuild his home with matted bamboo and bamboo rods, but otherwise the

floods had 'completely drained Djaelani of his pitifully meagre resources'.[10] Herb was dismayed at the state of his friend's home and family, which had, even apart from the floods, clearly deteriorated in the ten months since they last met:

> … it was pathetic to see my old shirts and to hear him say that they were coming to an end and he was worried about what he'd wear after they couldn't be used any more … the little Armi [also known as Karni] just over two, is still pretty sick. She looks fairly strong – again I'm sure Djaelani wasn't begging when he said what a big difference our two powdered tins of milk had made – but still has sores over most parts of her body and periodic ear troubles. Apparently they have been to the hospital and to local medical practitioners of some sort, but have got tired of the ineffectuality of it. I'm hoping to be able to take Vern [Bailey] down there when he's in Djakarta … His [Djaelani's] wife is expecting a third child in four months time.[11]

As the political situation became increasingly unstable, Indonesia's economy began to decline rapidly. Yet another long period of struggle for the people of Indonesia was just beginning.

Researching Indonesia

By the time Herb left Indonesia in August 1956, his network of friends and colleagues had expanded to include the increasing numbers of foreign researchers working there. This community was small enough for him to know all of them personally, and he was quickly introduced to new arrivals. Herb met Wim Wertheim, 'the grand old man of contemporary Indonesian studies in Holland', for the first time when he returned to Jakarta

in May 1957.[12] Wertheim had published *Indonesian Society in Transition* in 1956 and, in his twelve months as a visiting professor, he was carrying out research for a revised edition, in response to the rapid rate of change in Indonesian politics.

Yogyakarta and its surrounds were Herb's first stop on a tour of Central and East Java to observe the regional elections. In early June, he stayed there briefly with British scholar of Malay and Indonesian language Tony Johns, who was lecturing at Gadjah Mada university. Herb also spent two nights in his *desa*, Pendoworedjo (which Herb also called 'Kamal'), and he described the visit as like going home.[13]

Already the voting trend across the regions indicated a major shift towards the PKI beginning with the 1955 national elections, with the party winning 16.4 per cent of the national vote. In Java, from where 88 per cent of its total national vote came,[14] the PKI had made great inroads. Herb discovered that in Kamal, the PKI had also made an impression. As he explained to his family at the time, this political alignment had complex motives and interpretations:

> The elections have undoubtedly produced a great increase in political thinking in Kamal, but in my short time there I really couldn't get any clear idea about how far this is spread. But I did have some fascinating political discussions with Pak Kromo. Although still first and foremost a Javanese mystic – in fact he has now written a large part of a book on mystical teaching – Pak Kromo is now the local Communist leader! Only in terms of the deep long-standing rivalry between Islam and Pak Kromo's type of Javanism can one explain this not uncommon phenomenon of Communism and mysticism going along hand and hand. To make things a bit more interesting,

> Pak Kromo has had his children become baptized Catholics! In fact Catholicism seems to have made big strides in Kamal in the last few years, largely still through Dutch priests.[15]

It is not entirely clear with which party Pak Kromo's sympathies had previously lain but, like many Javanese villagers, they probably lay with Sukarno's PNI. The PKI's success in Java in the national elections, and, as was increasingly also predicted, in the regional vote, were largely at the expense of the PNI, but also the Muslim parties as well.[16] The further success of the PKI in these regional elections was judged by analysts to be part of the fallout from the 1955 election result, deemed unsatisfactory by many Indonesians for its failure to solve the country's political instability and associated ills and leading to the abandonment of the four major parties. Wertheim, who was also observing the elections at this time, argued in his analysis that Indonesians found in the PKI the lesser evil, because 'they were the only party which could not be held responsible for the failures of successive governments and for the rampant corruption'.[17] In these regional elections, the PKI gained support among blue-collar, urban unskilled voters and maintained its traditional support base of villagers, farmers and labour unions.[18] Herb travelled from Yogyakarta to Semarang, Salatiga and Ponorogo in East Java, regions he had also visited before the 1955 election. The success of the PKI was evident across Java where they won the majority of votes. In Jakarta it gained an extra 4 per cent of the vote on the 1955 national election and trailed Masjumi only slightly in the final national tally.

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Upon his return to Jakarta three weeks later, Herb received the urgent news that one of Djaelani's daughters was gravely ill with worsening pneumonia. Fortunately Vern Bailey, now a doctor and volunteer running a medical clinic in Subang, was visiting Jakarta so, together with another volunteer, John Gare, they rushed to Djaelani's home. The three men arrived to discover they were too late. Karni, the youngest daughter, had died thirty-six hours earlier and the family were in the grip of grief and funeral rituals: 'The atmosphere in the kampong was quite shattering. No atmosphere of life being thought cheap!'[19]

Into America via Vienna

In early August, Betty and baby David arrived at Tanjung Priok on board the *Oceania* after a difficult three-week voyage during which they had both been seasick constantly. After the longest separation since they married, Betty and Herb were relieved to be reunited. They had decided to travel to America via Vienna so that Herb could show Betty the country of his birth and introduce her and David to family and friends. The *Oceania* took them to Genoa, and from there they travelled to Austria.

Although Arthur Feith was to visit Vienna many times in years to come, Herb was the first of his family to return after their departure in 1939. After their war-time interlude in Melbourne, Arthur's sister Ida had returned to Vienna with her daughter Lily, gentile son-in-law Wolf and granddaughter Evie. From Arthur's regular correspondence with his sister, the Feiths knew that the transition back to Vienna had been difficult for them, especially for Ida. The family's domestic situation was fraught and Ida claimed to be extremely unhappy, unable to find peace in a city where her fellow citizens had only a few years earlier been complicit in the

discrimination, persecution and extermination of her friends and family members and in which she still felt like an outcast.

For Herb spending the week in Vienna surrounded by discontent was further assurance that his own parents had made the right decision in making Australia their home. Although pleased to meet old friends and his family, there was little to hold Herb in Vienna, and he encountered it much as a tourist would, guiding Betty around its monuments and parks. They spent the next two weeks in Holland, where Betty cared for David and enjoyed some sightseeing while Herb travelled around to several universities and met scholars of Indonesia.

Cornell and the Modern Indonesia Project

The Feiths finally arrived at Cornell University in mid-September 1957 in Ithaca, New York. Their belongings had arrived at their new home ahead of them. Betty's former boss at the Department of Education in Indonesia, Jo Kurnianingrat, was now at Cornell studying literature and linguistics on a Ford Foundation scholarship. With George Kahin, she found them accommodation just 200 metres from her own home. The house was in Collegetown, a village of students just across the creek from the University and a short walk to the CMIP building. As was typical of the area, their lodgings were within a weatherboard double-storey and once large home that had been divided into apartments and rooms. The Feiths occupied a downstairs two-room apartment with access to a veranda and small garden. Typically, it was the simplicity of the place that satisfied its new residents most: 'Central heating throughout and both flats have refrigerators, but you'd be wrong to conclude from that that this is a flash place. That's what we like about it. It's two rooms, large and with only a little bit of furniture (that looks as if it may well

have been acquired at auctions), a kitchen and a bathroom.'[20]

The university, founded in 1865, is spread over undulating grounds above the small rural township of Ithaca and overlooking the south end of Cayuga Lake in upstate New York. Part manicured and formal, part wooded wilderness, complete with gushing rapids falling down rocky gorges and resplendent at that time of year in brilliant autumnal reds and oranges, the landscape was awesome. The beauty of their surroundings was not lost on Herb and Betty:

> The University itself is most beautifully situated on a hill outside the town. It's the land on which Ezra Cornell did his farming – gentlemen farming – while fighting the battle for the telegraphs monopoly. When he got the monopoly he gave the land to the University, and what a beautiful large block it is! The largeness means there is still something rural about it. The buildings are far enough apart for the views to remain and there are still real bush tracks like the one I always take to the Modern Indonesia Project office where you can see half a dozen squirrels at a time. Skirting the University grounds are two creeks flowing in very steep gorges.[21]

In 1957, as it is today, Cornell was one of America's eight esteemed Ivy League universities. It could already boast seven Nobel Prize winners, mostly in the sciences, but their number included, significantly for the Feiths, John R. Mott, one of the founders of the World Student Christian Federation, who shared the Peace Prize in 1946.

Herb's early assessment of the university was not entirely favourable. For him its lack of ferment and debate compared unfavourably with the atmosphere of the University of Melbourne.

'One of the most striking things about Cornell … is the lack of any clash of ideas … This expansive optimistic society imbues them [students] with the feeling that the central answers have already been given …'[22] The exception to this was of course the CMIP, its staff and students. In this project, Cornell had a leading centre of intellectual endeavour and fervent questioning.

Since 1954 Kahin had assembled a world-class, although still small, team of scholars of Indonesia and its language. Among them was John Echols, professor of Indonesian language, who in 1962 compiled what was for many decades the definitive Indonesian–English dictionary. Kahin's own *Revolution and Nationalism* (1952) was already considered an exemplary detailed study of Indonesian politics until its independence. A steady stream of the foremost Indonesia scholars from Indonesia and around the world spent periods at CMIP as research fellows. In the past few years Kahin had sourced significant funds and spent them on attracting the best graduate students from America, Indonesia and around the world to his program. When Herb arrived, there were eight graduate students and fellows in the program, including Americans John Smail and Jay Maryanov and fellow Australian David Penny. Herb was especially impressed by the number and calibre of the Indonesian students, who included future Indonesian intellectuals Selo Soemardjan and Deliar Noer. Surrounded by some old friends and warmly welcoming new ones, Herb and Betty immediately felt at home: 'Fortunately we're not altogether strangers here and the Indonesians and Americans whom we knew from Indonesia and have met again here have been extremely good to us.'[23]

Herb was also greeted by his freshly published monograph, *The Indonesian Elections of 1955*, the sixth in an Interim Report Series edited by Kahin. His hard work since leaving Indonesia just over a year earlier had paid off. With the aid of his Cornell

Fellowship, supported by a Rockefeller Foundation grant, Herb had completed the ninety-page report in March and forwarded it to CMIP for editing. Kahin's mentorship and the generosity of the CMIP and Rockefeller partnership were considerable. They had not only enabled Herb to continue his work in Melbourne but also allowed him to return to Indonesia for further research. Unsurprisingly, this generosity did not come without high demands and expectations of him. In his preface to the elections monograph, Kahin committed Herb to a tight schedule for a larger work: 'At present he [Feith] is working on a more substantial and definitive monograph which we hope will be completed and published in 1957.'[24] Herb's work rate was so far impressive. In addition to the elections monograph, he had brought his Masters thesis with him, which after revision was published by CMIP in 1958 as *The Wilopo Cabinet, 1952–1953*.

The relative speed with which the elections monograph appeared was an indication of the premise behind the Interim Report Series. Launched the previous year with Donald Willmott's *National Status of Chinese in Indonesia* (1957), the series' *raison d être* was to issue quick and timely publications in an effort to overcome the time-lag between completion of fieldwork research by scholars of Indonesia and publication of their findings. As Kahin conceived it, the series enabled preliminary publication of key research findings in research very soon after scholars returned from the field. This had the advantages of allowing critical feedback from fellow researchers and avoiding duplication in their work. Importantly, it meant the dispersal of current research within Indonesia also.

Herb settled into university life and work at Cornell with ease and renewed passion. He was in his element among the CMIP community where he could always find people to talk 'Indonesia'

with. As a requirement of the doctoral program, Herb took a number of courses in his chosen fields of Asian Studies and Political Science. He set to work on revising his Masters thesis, incorporating new material he had collected on his visits to Indonesia in 1954–56 and 1957 that expanded it considerably.

In early 1958, again showing foresight and a keen awareness of the growing demand for material about the politics of developing nations, Kahin rallied his graduate students together to produce the volume *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*. He invited Herb to write the 'Indonesia' section. The motivation for this publication was to provide general and potentially comparative information and data about the political systems of these new nations of Southeast Asia (comprising Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam and Burma).

Kahin worked his charges hard. At regular group meetings they thrashed out the common subject headings under which each country would be researched and written up – Historical Background, Contemporary Setting, Political Process, Major Problems – understanding that 'an attempt at this stage to form broad generalisations about the political systems of Southeast Asia would be premature'.[25] Kahin was content to contribute to the current and necessary interest in the politics of these countries, although at this stage he was not convinced that a fully comparative or general approach to the politics of such newly formed nations could yet be achieved.[26] Kahin's dynamic style of editing and mentoring kept Herb and his fellow scholars energised in spite of their heavy workload. 'George is the sort of boss I like,' Herb wrote. 'He makes you work – at least I think he will have that effect on me, if he can't nobody can – but encourages you along with praise and trust. I certainly will have to work to be worthy of this trust.'[27]

In early 1958, as Herb set to writing the 'Indonesia' section, Indonesian politics changed rapidly. As the volume had been designed to focus on the contemporary politics of Southeast Asian nations, his analysis of the political systems, actors and trends had to be immediate. Since he had left Indonesia in August 1957 there had been major political and economic shifts. Rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi continued. There had been an assassination attempt on Sukarno in November. An Indonesian-sponsored resolution in the United Nations General Assembly to force the Dutch to negotiate on West New Guinea had failed, and Dutch companies in Indonesia had been seized in early December. Keeping pace with events in Jakarta, even with access to the considerable Indonesian-language resources available at the CMIP, demanded an intensive effort. The publication schedule was so tight that Herb was writing about events as they took place. The book was written and published within little more than twelve months, less than two years into the Guided Democracy phase of Indonesian politics. Sukarno's regime was to last another seven years. *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia* was updated and reissued in 1964 in a format that was more in keeping with the emerging and increasingly influential comparative method in political and social research.

Ithaca, Cornell and CMIP were entirely conducive to scholarly proficiency and to the generation of ideas. Ithaca, being far from major towns and cities and with its long cold winters, was an ideal place to hunker down at a typewriter. As Herb noted soon after his arrival: 'There's plenty of pressure to work at this place, and a very good thing for me.' The isolation and separation of students and staff from off-campus life – even visits to Ithaca township were rare – meant there was constant and concentrated mixing and mingling, both professional and personal. Ideas

were readily exchanged and people were generous with materials, comment and criticism. Herb's seniority in years and experience meant that Kahin handed considerable responsibility to him for the day-to-day running of CMIP during his occasional absences.[28]

Herb and Betty both benefited from the collegial atmosphere. The CMIP building became a home away from home for its students, staff and their families. The Feiths became particularly close to Australian–American couple David and Janet Penny, and rekindled friendships with such Indonesians as Jo Kuningrangat: 'We're thrilled about the way we've been accepted into the tight little exile community.'[29] The CMIP crowd shared several meals a week, the Pennys bravely lent Herb their car for his driving lessons, and toddler David enjoyed the attention of several adoring adopted aunts and uncles. Herb revelled in the deep focus on Indonesia that the CMIP provided, both socially and in scholarly terms. For him and his fellow students Indonesia was as vivid and almost as immediate to their lives and thoughts as it would have been if Ithaca was a leafy inner Jakarta suburb. As fellow student Dan Lev and his wife Arlene described it years later; the CMIP housed a 'cohesive company of graduate students, few of whom, probably, ever found that kind of community again'.[30]

Living in America

As they put down roots, Betty and Herb sought out a community for prayer and worship. In Australia, as in Indonesia, they were drawn to liberal and progressive Christianity where identification is fluid and open. Herb had often accompanied Betty to church on Sundays in Melbourne. In Indonesia they had been part of a community of Christian groups, but had become more and more sympathetic to pluralistic and holistic interpretations of religion

in people's lives more generally. In America Betty and Herb were confronted with a different approach to religion and spiritual devotion in which one's broader identity is more tightly bound. Herb wrote to the Graduate Scheme network three months after their arrival:

> Religion is part of Americanism. You are American through being Protestant, Catholic or Jewish and you're not properly American unless you are one of these. … Church attendances are enormously high, also in the Universities, but I have the strong impression that the message that the churchgoer gets is in no way a challenge … Which is not to say that there isn't a lot of genuine religious devotion. There certainly is, and religious passion too. And half-religious good-will is a genuine thing too.[31]

Neither the Pentecostal nor the conservative churches they found in America were unfamiliar to Herb and Betty. Although they felt very comfortable attending Cornell's interfaith place of worship – 'a remarkable building which can be converted from Catholic church to Protestant chapel to Jewish synagogue by the simple pressing of buttons!'[32] – they began regularly to attend Quaker prayer meetings held in a university library instead.

Although Herb and Betty had met several Quakers in Jakarta, the meetings at Cornell were the first they had attended. The Quakers' principles of peace-building and their relief work after the war and in the developing world were familiar to them, and matched their own volunteer ethos. In America Herb spoke at many local Quaker meetings, youth camps and school groups about the Graduate Employment Scheme, as always making clear

his ambition and passion for the Scheme and the potential of similar projects.

Their decision in February 1958 to baptise David was a natural and comfortable one for Herb and Betty. Herb had turned away from his Jewish religion many years earlier. Despite this, however, and the difficulties they had gone through before their wedding a few years earlier, Herb's parents, it seemed, remained hopeful that their grandchild would at least not be baptised in any faith. As Arthur wrote:

> The holy water … I imagine that to stand for a warm heart and a coolly discerning mind! If he has the latter he will discover that there are many dwellings in the Lord's mansion and he will choose one with big windows and a wide view all round. If he were to become an Agnostic he would be close to my heart … A genuine Jew like his grandmother and great-grandmothers would perhaps be the next best but I don't mind a warm-hearted Christian.[33]

Lily's acceptance was more sombre:

> Herb you are right, my heart is very heavy, but it was a thing that had to come, I knew it from the day when you got engaged. On that day I told Betty: there is one God and there are several ways to find him, and one has to be tolerant. Many thoughts crossed my mind. Did you develop in this direction because we did not give you a religious upbringing as a small child (Dad's influence). I did not teach you to pray as a small child, only when you could think and feel yourself. Can Judaism not survive if you are a liberal Jew? The main thing is that you bring David up with a lot of love then he will have a loving

heart and 'he will do justice, love mercy and walk humbly unto our God'. Religion should have the only purpose to love thy neighbour as thyself, to have real understanding of the other person.

I could not go on writing different ideas whirling in my head. Dad advised me to read Koestler's: *Judah at the Crossroads*, which I did. He advocates that you have to decide either for Israel or for assimilation. I suppose I have decided and you have decided …[34]

The search for critical explanations

In his review of the first edition of *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, Lucian Pye, doyen of the comparative approach to the study of developing nations, praised Kahin for his foresight and hard work in bringing together much-needed research: 'at last we have a single volume that provides a reliable introduction to the countries of Southeast Asia'.[35] Pye also lauded Kahin's more general achievement 'in training a generation of American scholars of Southeast Asia'. George Kahin's approach to the Interim Report Series and this compilation was in step with the growing momentum behind area studies at that time, highlighted by the work of the Social Science Research Council Committee on Comparative Politics established in 1954 (the same year as the CMIP), with Pye as a founding member.

Funds from private sector bodies such as the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations boosted the fledgling fields of area studies and comparative politics in the 1950s. The CMIP benefited greatly from its relationships with these foundations. In American academic and government institutions in the post-war decade, the search was on for a way to analyse and study developing nations in a way that allowed scholars, governments and other agencies

in Western nations to assess, support and even design a pathway to their modernisation and development. There was a sense of urgency in this search. Area studies and its emerging theoretical approaches, and comparative politics more generally, were at their peak in the late 1950s and early 1960s, even though they were still little tested. As so very little time had passed since these nations had come into existence, a measured historical approach that allowed for retrospectivity and context was not possible. Although it was still a small field in the late 1950s, comparative politics was an intense and creative field of study. For a political scientist working on Indonesia in America at this time who was looking for sharper analytical tools to test his empirical work, it would have been difficult to avoid this theoretical approach.

After a year at Cornell, the intensity of his writing workload and his CMIP administrative duties began to take their toll on Herb. He lamented in November 1958: '… in fact I'm further away from Indonesian developments now than I have been since I first went to Indonesia. There just isn't time.' As a consequence, Herb decided to rethink his study plans and, while he would not necessarily lighten his workload, he would change their direction, at least temporarily:

> … best for me to drop all ideas of doing an academic thesis this academic year … I am 'written out' and need to get some fresh stimulation before I do any more writing … I will work mainly on Political Theory and American Government … probably audit two or three lecture courses, one on political theory (paralleling the seminar, but this is one of my weak areas, where a whole lot of background has to be filled in) …[36]

Despite his lament about the distance he felt from his research interest, Indonesia, Herb had consciously decided to shift his emphasis away from Indonesia for a time and, thereby, also from the CMIP: 'I'm going to be sorry about being able to devote only very little time to Indonesian studies, but that won't be able to be helped for this year. The idea of getting solid grounding which fills out the many long painful gaps – or only a few of them – is a very satisfying one …'[37]

Herb had decided to take American and European politics and political theory as well as Asian politics because 'I am being trained not in the study of an area, but in a discipline, in Political Science. It sounds rather self-important, but there's something in it.'[38] Political science, a new and evolving discipline when Herb first encountered it in the late 1940s, provided the dynamism he believed he needed in his approach to his study of Indonesia. Herb was excited by its questions of agency, the function of the individual and the state within the international system and, most importantly perhaps, by its intrinsic emphasis on problem-solving.

Herb sensed that the theoretical tools he needed to give force to his deep observations and analyses of Indonesian politics of the 1950s lay outside the field of Indonesian studies. He attended conferences and sought out the literature emerging from the burgeoning new fields of area studies, comparative politics and political development, including that of its leading proponents Lucian Pye, David Apter, Edward Shils and Israeli structural theorist Shmuel N. Eisenstadt.[39] Within this literature, modernisation theory emerged in the American academy in the late 1950s, as the realities and implications of decolonisation took effect. Theories of modernisation and political development, including structural functionalism, aimed to forge a path or model for studying and knowing the politics of non-Western nations. Herb

set about exploring the possibilities these theories held while maintaining a certain level of scepticism. To this end he began to correspond with several of its leading scholars of whom Pye and Eisenstadt were the most receptive.

Herb found yet another source for mentoring and critical comment on the direction in which to approach his dissertation in the wider Indonesianist community of scholars, beyond that of CMIP. The CMIP publication program's objective of stimulating and inviting comment and criticism from other scholars in the field was, in the case of Herb's publications, a success. He corresponded with several scholars about his work in 1958 and 1959. His most influential and lengthy correspondence was with his friend Clifford Geertz, former student of one of the godfathers of modernisation theory, Talcott Parsons, who would soon move from the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University to the University of Chicago with Apter, Shils and Lloyd Fallers and attached to the Committee on the Comparative Study of New Nations.[40] Geertz was particularly excited by Herb's Wilopo monograph and encouraged his now strong urge to find a way to bring even more analysis to his rich historical narrative, pointing in particular to the work being done in comparative political theory:

> … it does seem to me that you … and all the political scientists writing on Indonesia have not yet gone far enough in the direction of trying to generalize about the nature of Indonesian (or SEA, or 'underdeveloped' or whatever) politics as such, about what is characteristic of them in contrast to (or similar to) Western politics and why. If you saw Lucian Pye's article on political parties in underdeveloped countries in a recent *Political Science Quarterly* (or somewhere) or David Apter's on

the Comparative Study of Politics in the latest *AJS*, you'll have some idea of what I mean. So far, most of you have been sticking to contemporary history and doing a bang-up job, better than is being done for any other new nation I can think of, but I hope soon you in particular will make more of an effort to get forth some analytic concepts, make some at least tentative theoretical generalizations about what is going on in Indonesia. Some of this sort of analysis is, of course, concealed in your work, which, I realize, is not so common-sensical as it looks, but I would like soon to see you bring your more general ideas out in the open in a more explicit and abstract form, though not of course at the expense of the descriptive work on which it is based.[41]

Promoting VGS in America, spring 1959

With the decision made to put aside his dissertation for the 1958–59 academic year and focus on filling in the gaps in his disciplinary knowledge, Herb turned his free time to publicising the Graduate Employment Scheme. The Scheme was still very much in his mind and in Betty's. They had left Melbourne knowing that Jim Webb, Don Anderson and returned volunteers would guide a steady ship. The Scheme had continued to attract interest from graduates, and there were twelve working in Indonesia in 1958. Since Herb's first period in Indonesia, thirty Australians had participated in the Scheme, some for more than their initial two-year placement. There had been the first marriage between an Australian graduate, Thelma Ashton, and an Indonesian (Rungkat),[42] and other unions were to follow in the next few years. Herb always believed such marriages, be they between Indonesians and Australians or peoples of other nationalities, to be a wonderful development towards overcoming cultural and national difference.

Herb saw his presence in America as a further opportunity to spread the news about the success of the Graduate Employment Scheme beyond the two countries involved. One possible avenue he saw was through contacts made in Jakarta with the Quaker–Mennonite–Protestant organisation International Voluntary Services, which had teams in several Asian countries and was keen to expand its operations into Indonesia in a similar way to the Australian Scheme. Herb reported to the *pegawai* network, 'From what I know of this crowd I am very hopeful about them. And I'm quite sure that there are plenty of young Americans who could and would be *pegawais* and really part of our gang …'[43] In early 1959 he wrote to various politicians and community leaders introducing himself and the Scheme and requesting meetings with them. In the spring break he arranged several meetings in Washington and New York. As an indication of Herb's prioritising of the many demands on him, he refused an invitation around this time from the US State Department to work as a translator for visiting Indonesian dignitaries, preferring invitations to speak at local Quaker meetings, youth and school groups about the Graduate Employment Scheme.

The dissertation

In autumn 1959, with his coursework assessment completed and the Kahin chapter away, Herb finally started to write his dissertation but still only tentatively. In long discussions with Kahin, they had decided that his initial plan to write a longer analysis of the 1955 elections should be expanded. Persuaded by Kahin and with an understanding of the historical importance of the past few years in Indonesia, Herb settled in to the idea of writing a political history of the period of parliamentary democracy in Indonesia from 1949 to 1957. It was, of course, a period during which seven

cabinets had been formed and dissolved. Herb had completed four years of work in the field during that period, and his close proximity and intimate access to the power-mongers and movers and shakers in Jakarta meant that he was, as Kahin knew, more than capable of such a task. As Herb explained to his scholarship sponsors, the Rockefeller Foundation, in his October progress report:

> In the last three weeks I have been working on plans for my dissertation. My earlier plan, which I may have mentioned to you, was to write a study of the Indonesian elections of 1955. But on Professor Kahin's suggestion I have decided to tackle a much broader subject, in effect to write a political history of the constitutional or parliamentary period of independence between December 1949 and March 1957. Although I do not have complete materials on this large subject I am hoping to be able to begin the actual writing before too long.[44]

The truth was that there was no shortage of materials. Herb had boxes and boxes of reports, field notes and drafts of ideas. Meanwhile, his deadline of August 1960, when his funding would expire, was rapidly approaching.

Herb was under pressure not only to complete the dissertation but also to make decisions about where to take his career after he had finished it. Arthur Feith gave his familiar frank opinion on where he thought Herb's skills were best suited.

> You know that Mum and I have never thought that you are cut out for an academic career but if academic – teaching would be much more in your line than research. I don't mean to say that you cannot do a good job researching, but your organisational abilities and your skill in handling people would not get full

> scope in the sort of research one does in Canberra, research in a library. Besides, after three years Cornell, won't you be fed up with this type of work? Even when you accepted the Cornell fellowship I had similar doubts; it has no doubt increased your skill for research work but even so I cannot see this as the field where your natural gifts can be put to best advantage.[45]

Nonetheless, despite his reservations about Herb pursuing an academic career, Arthur and Lily were extremely excited by the announcement in 1958 that a new university was to be built on Melbourne's southeastern fringe and made no secret of their hope that it might offer opportunities for Herb.

By October 1959 Herb and Betty had decided that they would definitely return to Australia after he had completed the dissertation, ideally to a career in academia and research. The offer of a research fellowship at the Australian National University's Research School of Pacific Studies cemented this decision. But it was the health of Herb's parents, who had both suffered serious scares in the previous eighteen months (Lily had discovered a malignant lump in her breast and Arthur a shadow on his lung) that persuaded Herb and Betty of the need to be near their families after so much time away. In October, Betty gave birth to their second child, Annie, and the family moved to more spacious accommodation.

Anti-Chinese sentiment in Indonesia

Relatively up-to-date news of the situation in Indonesia was readily available at the CMIP as Indonesian and other students returning from the field or in correspondence with those at home

brought a constant stream of first-hand data to supplement what could be gleaned from the newspapers received in the CMIP library. The continuing rebellions in South Sumatra and Central Sulawesi were of great concern and, as Sukarno's Guided Democracy showed few signs of returning to parliamentary democracy as he acted to reign in the political parties and organisations, the extra-political centres of power stepped up their battle for the spoils.

In early July 1959, at the urging of the Armed Forces, Sukarno announced a return to the 1945 Constitution, and therefore greater executive control, thus precipitating a series of chaotic political and economic events.[46] This included the seizure of Dutch-owned companies by the state for indigenous business in conjunction with elements of the military and the so-called *Benteng* (fortress) policy promoting indigenous business over Chinese-owned business. In November 1959 a ban on retail trade by aliens (*warga negara asing*; WNA), Presidential Regulation Number 10/1959 (PP10/1959), was then implemented haphazardly in some rural areas across Java. Complex political manoeuvrings surrounded the implementation of the ban, but ostensibly it remained a response to the sentiments expressed by indigenous businessmen through the Assaat movement in an era of heightened economic nationalism.[47] But the ban referred specifically to *alien* traders, not all traders, and Arab and Dutch 'alien' traders were excluded from the regulation.[48] Given the concentration of 'alien' Chinese in rural trade and commerce – there were around 85 000 in retail business alone – this regulation had the potential to affect gravely not only them but also the economy as a whole.[49] The regulation was enforced most brutally in West Java, where newspapers reported that the military 'threw hundreds of Chinese families into trucks and took them to camps built with haste'.[50]

Government estimates were that 25 000 shops were affected by the ban. In 1960 more than 102 000 'alien' Chinese left Indonesia. In other years around this time this number was 12 000.[51] In the regions where the law was enforced most vigorously, the actions of the regional military command were not unlike a program of ethnic cleansing.

Herb followed these events closely from Ithaca. Needless to say the news that people had been expelled from their homes and shifted to camps *en masse* had alarming personal resonances. As the expulsions of ethnic Chinese escalated through November 1959, Herb and his father corresponded at length and inevitably drew comparisons with their own experience. Arthur wrote:

> Yes, Indonesian action against the Chinese certainly reminds one of Nazism and indeed there is some substance in describing the Chinese as 'Jews of the East' … The humane aspect apart, the Indonesian action is even sillier as they need the Chinese skill and experience much more than the Germans needed the Jews! With the Chinese out of the way, another scapegoat will have to be created.[52]

As the Chinese Government sent ships to 'repatriate' the displaced 'alien' Chinese, the West sat on its hands, refusing to condemn the persecutions, not wishing to be seen to take the side of Communist China. Herb was moved to write a letter to the *New York Times* in early December decrying the persecution and expulsion of ethnic Chinese from rural areas in West Java. The letter was published on 15 December with the heading 'Persecution in Indonesia: West urged to protest current anti-Chinese measures' and condemned the continuing persecution of the Chinese minority and the lack of international outcry in particular: 'Let it

not be said that the West is less interested in the human rights of a minority group, simply because a Communist power is attempting to come to the group's defence. Twentieth century European history should surely have taught us that injustices to minorities must be the concern of men of every nationality.'[53]

The strong and varied reactions to his letter of his fellow Indonesianists and Indonesian friends and colleagues had an enduring influence on Herb. As he told his father:

> I am amazed by the intensity of feeling given diplomatic expression on both the Chinese and the Indonesian side. One consequence of this has been to make my Indonesian friends here in Ithaca less and less inclined to accept the argument that I set forth in my letter to the *Times*. Among Americans on the other hand there have been various other favourable reactions.

Of the responses he had received, Herb was most concerned about one from his old friend Tina Franz: 'Well she simply enclosed a cutting from a press editorial expressing arguments why the economic power of the Chinese must be radically broken, and added on top "We agree with this".'[54] Arthur encouraged him to see both sides of the polemic: 'Tina Francs' [*sic*] reaction is indeed disheartening but to be honest, are you quite sure you wouldn't be equally callous but for the fact that you are a Jew, having experienced discrimination and persecution and therefore able to draw a parallel?'[55]

For his non-Indonesian friends at Cornell and from the University of Melbourne and the Graduate Employment Scheme, however, Herb's letter was entirely typical of his approach to Indonesia and human rights issues more broadly: 'I read your letter in the *Times* and found it altogether consistent with a nobility

of character and soul which is yours.'[56] Cliff Geertz commended Herb for taking a moral position, despite the opposition it would find among Indonesians and the risk to his own position:

> For someone whose work depends so much on maintaining workable relationships with Indonesians, I think such a clear stand on principle represents a level of morality which is, in my country at least, rather rare nowadays, to put it mildly … its initial effect on me was to make me feel guilty that I had not had the same impulse to make the same sort of public condemnation of a set of policies to which the term fascistic can be given in a quite literal, non-name-calling sense.[57]

As Geertz's comments indicate, taking a moral position was also rare among scholars in the academy. However, for Herb's Indonesian friends, like Tina Franz it was a misunderstanding that was, at worst, close to betrayal.

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A few months later, in February 1960, a red swastika was painted on the Shrine of Remembrance beside the Royal Botanical Gardens in Melbourne. The graffiti followed incidents that indicated increasing anti-Semitism and anti-Israel sentiment in Australia and around the world as Israel maintained its assault on the Gaza, Syria and Egypt border areas. Herb lamented to his parents that evidence of the trend in Melbourne did not bode well, to which his mother replied, 'I don't know you to be a pessimist, but I sincerely hope that your outlook re anti-Semitism was too pessimistic.' Perhaps alarmed by Herb's uncharacteristic gloom, Lily was compelled to ask her son:

> Did you Herb experience yourself any signs of anti-Semitism? But I am sure that you would be able to give the right answer, to stick up for your right. You would not take it if somebody would say: You dirty Jew. But I do hope that a thing like that should never happen to you. It happened to you when you were six years old and it has moulded your whole life.[58]

Final stages

Herb spent much of the winter and spring at his desk in the CMIP, passing freshly written pages to Betty for typing when the children slept. The task was by any account a considerable one – to write a political history and analysis of the period of Indonesia's parliamentary rule, December 1949–March 1957. His two published monographs comprised a very small portion of this larger work covering seven cabinets and the first parliamentary election, its failure and descent into autocratic rule. On top of managing all this empirical data, Herb was still struggling to find a theoretical hook to hang his rich material from. He was increasingly attracted to the comparative politics approach and, to a certain extent, its use of modernisation theory. He saw a great deal within it to compare with the observations he was making about Indonesia. He was trained primarily as a political scientist, and it was important to him that his dissertation therefore contained a theoretical idea that made the best use of the rich foundations of his historical narrative. The criticisms of the examiners of his MA thesis would have also made him conscious of the need to bring sharp, critical and theoretical analysis to his richly descriptive work. At the CMIP, however, Herb's search for a theoretical cornerstone for his study was not warmly received.

His fellow Indonesia scholars and students advised him to stick

to the history. In her review of *The Wilopo Cabinet, 1952–1953*, Ruth McVey, a research fellow at CMIP, had already articulated some discomfort with his use of 'intellectual' and 'mass leadership' classifications there, warning: 'Any attempt at placing political forces in dichotomous categories is liable to over-generalisation, and this criticism may occasionally be raised here. Western-style education is not always synonymous with an "intellectual" approach to government …'[59] Kahin, in his subtle way, also sought to curb Herb's adventuring in this direction, assuring him that his historically grounded analysis alone would make a critical contribution. As Herb explained to Geertz in July 1960, he was more or less persuaded by Kahin's argument:

> For a while I have been thinking about a more analytical sort of thesis, analysis of parties and certain aspects of the sociologically oriented approaches of the Pye, Apter, Riggs, Shils, Eisenstadt kind. But I eventually decided to a primarily historical thesis, partly because this was George's suggestion (and a great honour, this very broad subject), partly because I don't really feel I can use the analytical tools with any confidence as yet …[60]

Although supportive of Herb's current position, Geertz continued to encourage Herb in the way he had in January 1959, arguing that 'we really should be able to begin now, ten years after the transfer of sovereignty, to say something about what is really characteristic and persisting about the Indonesian mode of doing politics'.[61] As a consequence, in August 1960, just weeks away from submitting the dissertation Herb was still unsure about his analytical and theoretical approach. He expressed his reservations about structural functionalism and modernisation theory to

Soedjatmoko: '… [that] kind of theorising. I'm not really sold on it – I sometimes feel that I must get back to a solidly historical if not directly Marxist approach, if I am not to allow the equilibrium model of these people deprive me of the dimension of this social reality – but I'm quite excited.'[62]

Despite his reservations Herb continued to be drawn to this analysis, in particular to those American political scientists Samuel Huntington described as belonging to a subgroup doing what he labelled 'comparative history'[63] – those scholars whose work supported a highly empirical approach, together with a study of institutions, leaderships and political cultures. Proponents of this form of political development theory included Lucian Pye, Martin Lipset and Shmuel Eisenstadt. They did not generalise to the same extent as those who took the structural functionalism approach that dominated modernisation theory; rather, they attempted to find patterns through an historical approach. Just over four weeks after expressing to Soedjatmoko his reluctance to embrace the theory because it might undermine his historical approach, it seemed to have receded. On 1 October he thanked Eisenstadt for sending offprints of his recent writing, saying: 'As far as Indonesia is concerned they hit home with a bang … emphasis on solidarity symbols (etc). My own work at the moment is much more historical than analytical in approach, though I am hoping to weave some of these analytical terms in …'[64]

When Herb submitted his dissertation for examination in October 1960, Kahin had already given him assurances that it would be published in the CMIP series by Cornell University Press. His central thesis was that liberal democracy – parliamentary democracy – had not so much failed in Indonesia as that its ability to succeed had been undermined by the different agendas of groups within politics of, as he labelled them (with a clear nod

to Eisenstadt and to Pye[65]), 'solidarity makers' personified by Sukarno on the one hand and 'administrators', whom he identified with Hatta and his coterie, on the other:

> In the last analysis constitutional democracy was defeated by the way in which the contest between these two views was resolved. The effort to establish constitutional democracy was made by one segment of the political elite, by those who wanted to 'dam up the Revolution'. The men who attempted to build a rule-based politics were the same group who sought to deal with political unrest by controls, who wanted to develop an efficient and somewhat non-political administration and army … But this group lost out in the battle for power … Their rivals were able to use and fan political unrest against them. Both the battle itself and its outcome were important in bringing about an end to constitutional democracy.[66]

Moreover, he concluded, opposition led by the President and a faction of the army to 'liberal democracy' increasingly 'fell on fertile ground' in a public that was fed up with the party process to date, the disappointment of the elections and also deeply hostile towards the West and those leaders perceived to be pro-West.[67]

Although they might have had misgivings about his adoption of the political development approach, the CMIP scholars admired greatly Herb's then unrivalled insights into the political system, its personalities, parties and, of course, language of Indonesia. As McVey had written in her review of his Masters thesis, 'Mr Feith understands both the usefulness and the limitations of interpretation, and he does not attempt to force his categories. He presents his material with lucidity and fairness, so that the reader is in a position to judge for himself.'[68] Despite their

hesitation, his colleagues eventually also appreciated his theoretical point and the rigour with which he considered its application. As George Kahin wrote in his foreword to *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*:

> The analysis which Dr Feith has made of his materials evidences, I believe, a perceptiveness sharpened by substantial training in the social sciences and much serious thought as to the appropriateness of existing methodological approaches. He has endeavoured to confront his data with a fresh eye, undertaking to shape his methodology to conform as much as possible to Indonesian realities and attempting to avoid the limitations of those aspects of the conceptual apparatus of political science which do not really fit …[69]

As Herb saw it in 1960, modernisation theory and its associated analytical tools provided a means towards understanding social and political change, transformation, elite formation and leadership in Indonesia at the national level, which was essentially a kind of problem-solving. The reality was, however, that by the time he completed the dissertation, the comparative politics and modernisation approach was attracting significant criticism. The charge was put forcefully by one critic: 'The idea of modernisation is primarily an American idea … Two features of this period stand out: a widespread attitude of complacency toward American society, and the expansion of American political, military, and economic interests throughout the world.'[70] Modernisation was deemed by its critics to be ethnocentric and a form of cultural imperialism imposing Western cultural choices.

After toying with a number of possible titles, including 'The Failure of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia', 'Constitutional

Democracy in Indonesia: Attempt and Failure', 'Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia: The Abortive Attempt', and 'Indonesia in Transition: Constitutional Democracy and its Demise',[71] Herb's 600-page dissertation on Indonesia's first period of parliamentary rule from late 1949 on 1957 was published with the title *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* in 1962 just as the debate about modernisation theory reached its climax.

SIX

Young scholar at work (1960–65)

> Those who know Herbert Feith will be aware that his interest in Indonesia is not merely academic and that he has a profound personal affection for the country and its people … his study constitutes a good example of the maxim that a scholar best serves such friendship through frankness of exposition and objectivity of appraisal.
>
> Kahin, foreword, *Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*.

Herb Feith returned to Australia in late 1960 where he was in demand as an expert on Indonesian politics. As a research fellow in the Research School of Pacific Studies at the Australian National University (ANU), he joined what was then a very small group of researchers working on Southeast Asia, including his old friend, linguist Tony Johns, and anthropologist Mervyn Jaspan. The location of Herb's first postdoctoral position in Canberra

was important in shaping further his sense that his knowledge of Indonesia should be useful not only to academia and to Indonesia itself but also for Australia's relations with its neighbour. Being in Canberra meant that he had access to policy-makers and received many invitations to talk to different groups, including the media.

Of greatest concern to Australians in relation to Indonesia at the time was the issue of West New Guinea. Australia was grappling with its policy direction on Indonesia more broadly as Sukarno took an increasingly hostile, anti-America and pro-China position in international affairs. Concerns about Sukarno's increasingly radical positioning in foreign affairs, and security concerns in relation to the shared border of West New Guinea and Australian New Guinea, Australia continued to back a negotiated resolution whereby the Dutch remained in the territory. By the early 1960s, however, the geostrategic situation in the region was quickly shifting as the United States, increasingly keen to improve its relations with Indonesia, which was also opening engaging with Russia, brought its pressure to bear on these negotiations. In Australia, Herb was concerned about attitudes in the local press and among politicians on the West New Guinea issue in particular, so he made himself and his knowledge of Indonesia available to Canberra's journalists and policy apparatchiks and contributed to public debate in the media.[1]

In April 1961 the issue of West New Guinea and Indonesian claims to the territory had forced the protagonists to the brink of armed conflict, and Australia needed to quickly pick which side it would back. Herb wrote an article published in the *Nation*, on the eve of a visit to Australia by Indonesia's General Nasution. Weighing up the political and geostrategic implications for Australia's relationship with Indonesia, Herb argued that the outcome of the visit 'may decide whether or not there is war over West New

Guinea' for, he posited, 'Unless our Prime Minister is prepared to give major concessions to Indonesians, concessions for which few have prepared the Australian public, it appears to me there is likely to be fighting in New Guinea before the end of the dry season now starting. And whatever the outcome of such fighting we would be bad losers.'[2]

The talks with Nasution in Canberra coincided with President Sukarno's visit to Washington where West New Guinea was on the agenda, but Herb argued it was in Australia that the key negotiations would be undertaken, for 'It is we who have been the most intransigent opponents of Indonesia's claims … Our determination to have Holland remain in the territory has been greater than that of Holland itself.' A likely compromise, and one that Herb most hoped would be reached, was for 'interim internationalisation of the area, with ultimate Indonesian sovereignty'. As Herb saw it, Indonesia's growing military strength as a result of arms purchases from Russia and America in the preceding years meant that Dutch resistance had no chance and that the risks for Australia if she backed the Dutch were too great. In weighing up the potential for UN talks to succeed and the fallout for Australia more broadly in Asia if she continued to support the Dutch as the losing side, Herb was also unequivocal. 'I believe that it is in our interests to cede major concessions to Indonesia on the West New Guinea issue – and this regardless of what we think of the current trend of domestic politics in Indonesia, and regardless of what we think are the wishes and interests of the people of West New Guinea'. As he saw it, and indeed Australia's policy-makers in the end, the 'facts of international life today' – whereby the Cold War arms race saw 'the neutralist countries of Asia … able to play the two blocs off each other, and so [have] won a new freedom of international action' – meant that Australia had no other choice.[3]

Back to the field

After almost four years away from Indonesia, Herb was keen to return, and his ANU fellowship made it possible for him to do so for an extended period of fieldwork in the second half of 1961. In August 1961 Herb joined Dan Lev, one of his fellow students at MIP at Cornell, in Jakarta and reconnected with his old contacts and made new ones. Much had changed politically and socially in Jakarta during his absence, including the exodus of the great majority of remaining Dutch following the nationalisation of foreign-owned businesses after 1957. Herb was initially overcome by Jakarta ('The impressions of noise, chaos, tremendous crowdedness and I suppose whitelessness were perhaps the strongest, and I felt something of a stranger') and faced with the familiar conundrum ('again the sensation of the thousands of hungry people all around – happy looking often, pluckily cheerful but in fact hungry – is strange and upsetting'), but he quickly slipped back into the volunteer lifestyle with relish, borrowing a bike from Soewarto, a friend from Kempen, and spending a lot of his time with volunteers, including Lance Castles and John Gare. He was also buoyed by 'the enormous freedom of expression'[4] he found among his former colleagues in the government offices and in Jakarta's bookshops; but the dramatic changes in the political situation meant significant changes too for the way Herb conducted his research.

In accordance with his recent interests in West New Guinea, Herb had planned to conduct research on this issue and to visit the province on this trip. Nonetheless, although he did go to West New Guinea briefly at the very end of his stay, he otherwise gave little more than a sideways glance to the West New Guinea issue in his research during his five months in Indonesia. Although it had loomed large before he left Canberra, once

he was inside Indonesia his attention turned to what he determined to be the immediate crisis, which related to the country's central political authority and the Sukarno regime's battle to hold on to power. Together with Dan Lev, he found out what he could about the three-year-long rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi, the PRRI/Permesta rebellions, which had only very recently been suppressed.

Their research was not carried out in these dangerous and difficult-to-reach provinces but in Jakarta. Some of Herb's best informants during the parliamentary democracy period of the 1950s, with whom he had the most political sympathy, were members of the PSI, which had been banned in 1960 because of its involvement in the rebellions. Herb and Dan were no doubt motivated to write about the rebellions by their proximity to these people, who were still in Jakarta. From their vantage point in the national capital they were keenly aware of the implications of the government's defeat of the rebellions, in terms of retaining its hold on power. In October 1961 a scare concerning the President's health sparked political gossip about succession. Herb thrived amid this intrigue because it highlighted the tumultuous political conditions: 'What a job for the political scientist, discerning the shape of things to come! It is indeed a real challenge, to discern which are the permanent elements in this situation, and which the ones deriving from a particular balance of top-level political forces …'[5]

His extended stay in Jakarta allowed Herb to observe closely the nation's increasingly dire economic situation, as prices for necessities continued to spiral beyond the means of the poor.[6] Sukarno's economic mismanagement since 1959 had led to hyperinflation, which would peak less than two years later in late 1963, as Sukarno embarked on his confrontation with Malaysia.[7]

The seizure of Dutch property and businesses in December 1957 and placing them under state control was the beginning of a trend towards 'a new bureaucratic capitalism',[8] which resulted in increased corruption in the extremely underpaid civil service and serious lack of interest from foreign investors. In late 1961 Herb reconnected with his friend Djaelani in his Jakarta slum. In recent years, John Gare had taken over where the Feiths had left off when they returned to Australia in 1956, providing support and some capital to Djaelani to start a tin recycling business. Nowhere was the economic consequences for the nation's economy of Sukarno's arrogant political manoeuvrings more apparent to Herb than in Jakarta's slums and in the accounts of his friends who lived there. Significantly, Herb dedicated his now completed and shortly to be published book, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, 'For D. who saw it all from the kampongs and suffered'.

Herb returned from this trip more uncertain than ever about how he should position himself in analysing the increasingly dire situation he had witnessed. As he wrote to his friend, historian Nugroho Notosusanto, in March 1962:

> The role of the foreign observer is one of tremendous privilege, but it doesn't permit one to protest, and that seems a tough limitation. On the other hand, it is a limitation shared with Indonesian intellectuals, and you bear so much heavier a burden, without the privilege … The problem of moral protest and political realism seems such an acute one. What is the relevance of a prophetic voice like Pak Said's to the conscience of Indonesian intellectuals who feel they ought to do something and blame themselves for not doing anything, yet are hamstrung by the fact that each of the available alternatives to the present regime, an army regime or (ultimately, perhaps

only after civil war) a Communist regime, is as unpalatable as the present political order. How can one be radical in one's protest when the objective constellation of political forces is one which tends to make one tinker with existing machinery, to confine oneself to working for small improvements in one little corner of society – and when jail is the penalty for radical protest of any but the most subtly expressed kind?[9]

Calm before publication

When he returned to Canberra in December 1961, instead of writing about his West New Guinea research as planned, Herb completed the piece he had written with Dan on the rebellions[10] and launched into a chapter he had promised to Ruth McVey for her textbook, *Indonesia*. McVey intended her volume to be for 'the reader who wishes to do more than scratch the surface of Indonesia' and 'to help bridge the gap between superficial impression and specialised knowledge concerning Indonesia'.[11] Herb was to write the chapter on the Guided Democracy period of government up to 1962. The chapter, titled 'Dynamics of Guided Democracy', takes up where *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* finished, with the 'disintegration, overthrow and abandonment of the constitutional democracy of the early years of independence'. It is a comprehensive analysis of the key issues and events in the period 1957–62, the institutions, hierarchies and ideologies of the bureaucracy, which, he observed, 'has lost its instrumental character and become a law unto itself'.[12] He also gave an analysis of the political and military elite and the situation of Indonesian society's most vulnerable: the ethnic Chinese minority and the poor.

Herb described the chapter as his finest work to date, and it was perhaps his boldest. He did not disguise his assessment of the

Sukarno presidency as authoritarian, self-aggrandising, corrupt at the highest levels and, above all, reckless. When reading this and other works Herb published in the early 1960s, it is important to consider that *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* was not yet published and that his doctoral dissertation was not widely available as Kahin and Cornell University Press had advised that its circulation be limited until it appeared as a book.

As he told his family in letters home from Jakarta in late 1961, his access to people in government offices was still very good, despite the political changes. In his chapter on the Guided Democracy period in McVey's volume, he drew on his wide range of informants when he wrote about the increased levels of corruption and the effects of rampant inflation and over-regulation and writes: 'There are the accounts of policemen being unwilling to come to the scene of an accident without payment … and … the scattered evidence suggests that payment for services is a regular feature of much of government at the regency, district and subdistrict levels. In many of these instances, corruption is partly institutionalised.'[13]

Herb concluded the long chapter by predicting either an 'army-made coup or an assassination' attempt on Sukarno and for the military then in charge, the problem of dealing with possible regionalist and PKI revolts.[14] The tone of the 100-page chapter is urgent and condemning, and its coverage is comprehensive and insightful. Herb was extremely aware of the risks involved in such bold commentary and that many of his friends and former colleagues in the Indonesian Government might not respond well to this line of argument and analysis. The pause between completing his doctorate and its publication was coming to an end, and the time for him to face the consequences of his work, both scholarly and political, had almost arrived.

Returning to Melbourne

While he was in Indonesia Herb had been offered a position in the Politics Department at the newly established Monash University at Clayton in the southeastern suburbs of Melbourne. The offer opened up prospects of exciting collaborative possibilities. Fellow Indonesia scholar John Legge was Chair of Monash's History Department, and Jamie Mackie was at the University of Melbourne. The conditions offered by Professor Rufus Davis, Chair of the Politics Department, were very enticing, and he and Betty were both very keen to return to Melbourne to be nearer their families.

In his letter of offer, Rufus Davis made clear his understanding that frequent field trips to Indonesia were essential for Herb's continuing research and that the position would have only a light teaching load for the first few years to ensure sufficient time for research. Herb accepted the Monash offer in late 1961 upon his return to Melbourne, negotiating a six-month delay in his starting date to allow him to fulfil his obligation to the Research School of Pacific Studies at ANU. Davis's generous offer of appointment meant that he was able to take trips to Indonesia almost every year in the 1960s, each of several months' duration. Consequently, in the early years of his career as an academic, Herb maintained excellent access and proximity to his research subject in terms of being in the field. For the political scientist with an emphasis on the empirical this was essential.

Soon after his return to Canberra, a temporary vacancy in the fledgling Indonesian and Malayan studies honours program at the University of Sydney gave Herb an opportunity to teach for its first term. The small group of students in the program comprised Harry Aveling, Peter Worsley, Stuart Robson and George Miller. All would go on to make careers in and important contributions

to the study of Indonesia. As a precursor to what would come at Monash, Herb found his first formal teaching experience greatly satisfying.

Herb joined a small but fast-growing Politics Department situated, unconventionally for Australian universities, within the Faculty of Economics and Politics. In addition to Davis, whose field was British and Australian politics, his colleagues included R.M. Martin, R.R. Orr, A.R.C. de Crespigny, G.C. Duncan and M.J. Walles. Although he was the only one in his department with a Southeast Asia focus, he had colleagues elsewhere at Monash, including John Legge, Cyril Skinner (from 1964), who was teaching Indonesian and Malay, and, later, Michael Swift in the Anthropology Department. Together they laid the foundation of what would become a significant research community in the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS), which was established in 1964.

Rufus Davis's promise of a light workload meant that Herb was only required to present guest lectures in his colleagues' courses in 1962 before commencing his own courses, 'Asian Politics: Asia since 1945' and 'Contemporary Political Thought', in 1963. The Asian Politics course outline was forthright in admitting that 'detailed consideration will be of only one Asian country, Indonesia'.

After returning with the children to Melbourne a little ahead of Herb, Betty sought and found their first – and, indeed, only – home. With a loan from Herb's parents Herb and Betty purchased a house in Kyarra Road, Glen Iris, close to Betty's mother and siblings and not very far from Arthur and Lily in Caulfield. Proximity to grandparents was even more appreciated when their third child, Robbie, was born in January 1963. Monash was a twenty-minute drive or forty-minute bike-ride from home and was close to train and tram lines. It was a comfortable home in a

leafy suburban street, just a few minutes' walk from trails along the nearby creek and wetlands.

After publication

The people who were Herb's sources of news and information in Indonesia had inevitably changed in the ten years since his first engagement. Much of the success of his 1961 trip was due to his still very good contacts in the bureaucracy. However, the major power shifts in politics in the early 1960s made his work increasingly difficult. The PSI's exclusion from politics in 1960 was a massive blow. His lack of contacts in the PKI and the military was potentially a disadvantage. As he admitted to Kahin late in 1963, 'My army contacts have never been very good, but I will certainly try to find out about the way the army regards itself, whether its leaders feel they need situations of crisis, and so on.'[15]

As Herb had himself predicted, the publication of his doctoral dissertation in 1962, as *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, was to be a turning point in terms of his access to many key people in Indonesian politics and government. The research and writing he had been able to do between completing his thesis and its publication was in retrospect very important in relation to his continued proximity to people close to Sukarno. Herb was very aware of the risks involved with publication of his book. In March 1962, just weeks before it was due to be sent to the printers, he wrote to George Kahin: '… it seems very likely that my book will get banned … I haven't come to any clear understanding of what the banning of a book means in the circumstances of the present, but it certainly means something …'[16]

Herb's fears, shared by Kahin, that his book would be banned in Indonesia were not realised, but that did not assuage similar concerns he had about his chapter in Ruth McVey's collection,

also near publication, which went even further in condemning the Sukarno regime under Guided Democracy. Herb was concerned that he had gone too far in his criticism and wrote to McVey expressing his fears that he would cause the book to be banned. Reflecting the spirit of the times, his editor replied:

> On the problem of the bluntness of criticism. I really don't think there is much we can do about this, Herb. Either your chapter or Doug's (revised) chapter[17] could get the book banned, I think. It will be stated in the introduction that the opinions presented in each chapter are those of the author of that chapter … Further than that, I don't believe we should go. If we are going to bring out a book that pretends to give insight rather than unprocessed facts we must be prepared to take the consequences of honesty. You may well feel that in order to preserve your own access to Indonesia the chapter should be toned down – in which case go to it in your revision. As far as I am concerned, whatever you are willing to say, we are willing to publish.[18]

Although neither book was banned in Indonesia, his concerns about the reactions of his former colleagues, friends and source people who were close to Sukarno were indeed justified. As a member of the group Herb named 'solidarity makers' aligned with Sukarno and about whom he was extremely critical, his former boss Roeslan Abdulgani took the analyses in *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* very personally. While Foreign Minister, Roeslan Abdulgani was briefly arrested in August 1956 on charges of corruption, which Herb documented as part of a wider public and media push against corruption at the time.[19] The cabinet later exonerated Roeslan of any wrongdoing, and he remained a powerful figure in the government. In

letters to Herb and Kahin, Roeslan accused him of making serious errors of fact that concerned him: 'I must say right away, however, that I am more than disappointed that such a large collection of material has led you to make incorrect conclusions on a number of occasions … As I have not had time to study all the book, I will limit my further comments to references to myself.'[20]

On several occasions after its publication, Roeslan was heard to criticise Herb publicly in Jakarta. Molly Bondan was similarly hostile in her response, although Herb was not altogether surprised by this, as he understood her loyalties to Sukarno. However, Roelsan Abdulgani's response was of greater concern because of his still senior cabinet position then as Minister of Information, with the potential to interfere in the granting of visas.

Deepening crisis in Indonesia, 1963–65

Later that year Herb also began to feel pressure on his approach to his work, particularly regarding the strength of his criticism of the Sukarno regime, from another less expected corner. While editing the second edition of *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, for which Herb wrote the Indonesia chapter, his mentor, supervisor and friend George Kahin found himself in the unusual position of reprimanding and faulting his former student:

> This is going to be a difficult letter for me to write … My major concern is that there has crept into your writing a tendency towards value judgements and moralising, which, while perfectly appropriate to certain kinds of writing … seems to me to have no place in the kind of book we are collectively writing … There is, I feel (and so do Jamie and Dan), a degree

> of partisanship in your writing … moral judgements are infused which bend much too far away from the actual base which you are in a position to lay.

Herb accepted this criticism and advice and responded with apologies and corrections, but also with a telling explanation:

> I am awfully sorry to have made all this trouble for you. I was of course venting my spleen on Sukarno, and a class text is not the place to do this.
>
> My only excuse is that I so often have to restrain myself, particularly in relation to Australian audiences whose strong anti-Indonesianism forces me to play the role of apologist for Soekarno.[21]

How to analyse and present critique of Guided Democracy was a problem for foreign scholars at this time. As Ben Anderson noted, attempts at 'balance' were also misread: '… the rise of Guided Democracy and the increasingly antagonistic relationship between Indonesia and the United States put the Kahinians on the defensive, in a position, in fact, where they were not infrequently attacked as apologists for Sukarno and his regime'.[22]

Indeed, Herb clearly felt that the dire state of relations with Indonesia at this time meant the situation was especially difficult for scholars in Australia. In Melbourne, Herb and his colleagues John Legge and Jamie Mackie understood these difficulties and made an attempt to bridge the divide between government policy-makers and non-government agents, including academics and journalists, on issues of foreign policy and Australia's relationship with Indonesia in particular. In November they brought together a group of about twenty participants from government, the media

and academia for a workshop on Australian policy on Indonesia.[23]

A few weeks later, in spite of his fears, Herb was allowed into Indonesia in December 1963 on a three-month visa. By this time a combination of political events and power shifts and his own critical perspective on the current government meant that his old informants were mostly marginal to the core political processes. In practice, however, Herb's skill as a political analyst and his deep knowledge as an observer of Indonesia meant that there is little evidence in his work from this time of this being an impediment. Critically, his professional position had also now changed. He was no longer a student researcher or civil servant reliant only on his own information gathering and the goodwill of his fellow government employees. He now had access to a growing network of fellow scholars, intellectuals and students. Moreover, his reputation as one of the foremost Indonesia experts was spreading internationally.

In his writings from this period, Herb's analyses are keenly attuned to the wheeling and dealing across the different sides of politics. Unable to get right into the centre of the PKI or into military and pro-Sukarno groups, he attuned his political antennae not only to these leadership groups but also to the social sensibility, the feeling on the street, in the market, at the office and the civil servant's desk. Herb's civil service credentials continued to open doors, even though others had been closed to him. His connection with the Graduate Employment Scheme also continued to give him a unique perspective. The small pool of Australian graduate volunteers in Indonesia during this time included teachers, civil servants, technicians and medical workers. They were a crucial source of insight into the day-to-day trials of ordinary Indonesians with whom the graduates lived and worked. Their regular and detailed reports about the increasingly harsh

economic and social realities reached him in Melbourne and, when he visited them in Indonesia, they now acted as his guides, especially Lance Castles and Mary Johnson.[24]

His contacts and informants had also extended to include the Indonesians with whom he had studied at Cornell, including Deliar Noer and Selo Soemardjan, and young American-trained academics like Miriam Budiardjo, Mely G. Tan and Mohammad Sobari. Highly influential, too, were the Cornell scholars who were in Indonesia for their fieldwork in the early 1960s, including Dan Lev and Ben Anderson.

Herb's enormous frustration and near-anger at the state of Indonesia's economy and society are evident in his writings from the early 1960s, particularly about the Guided Democracy period. Leaving aside his frustrations at the repeated, but always empty, promises of elections, he saw on his visits in 1961, 1963–64 and May 1965 the conditions in which his friends lived deteriorate ever further. Basic necessities were scarce or priced beyond reach. Indonesians were increasingly disgruntled as Sukarno lost touch with their daily reality, preferring to pursue an adventurous foreign policy and, in domestic policy, what Herb declared a 'politics of symbols': 'Soekarno appears to reject the present, seeing it largely a product of the colonial and liberal (1949–59) past', he wrote. In an article titled 'Indonesia's political symbols and their wielders' written just as President Sukarno declared himself 'President for Life', Herb's dismay is palpable: '… government propaganda has so structured the mental worlds of members of the political public that they cannot reject particular ideological formulations on which the government insists'.[25]

At home in Melbourne, Herb, Betty and other former volunteers and members of the Australia–Indonesia Association of Victoria did what they could to respond to the increasingly

pressing needs of their friends in Indonesia. In mid-1964 a group of them sourced and packed medical supplies to send to Bandung, where graduate volunteers would make sure they reached clinics with severe shortages.

Rapid and critical changes on the domestic and international landscape led Indonesia even deeper into crisis in 1963–64. The formation of Malaysia in 1963 radicalised Sukarno's position, and Western attitudes to his government hardened. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended credit as Indonesia ceased trade with Singapore and Malaysia. Before leaving on his next trip, which Herb described as a 'very rewarding, even more confusing, if not depressing eight weeks',[26] he had sought Cliff Geertz's advice about how he should spend his time and what questions he should seek to answer through his research:

> … what should I look for? … There are a number of interrelated questions here, most of them moral before one's very far into them: having now come around to your position – I trust it is still your position – that Sukarno's disappearance from the political scene is much to be hoped for, and believing that his position is awfully shaky, I find it hard to know how – by what form of publication and what focus of investigation – I can best steer my way between Willard Hanna-style exposé writing on the one hand and on the other hand academic obfuscation which by its deadpanness takes the regime more seriously than it deserves to be taken. I am making a mouthful of it, but I am sure you know very clearly what I mean …[27]

During his visit to Indonesia in late 1963 and early 1964, Herb spent a lot of time with Ben Anderson in particular. One can imagine that some of the major themes and discussion points

of their conversations on how to analyse Indonesian politics are more or less present in Anderson's review of *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*.

Anderson opens with great praise for the book, claiming 'it is far the best and most comprehensive survey of Indonesian politics between 1950 and 1959'; he is, however, critical of its fundamental premise because of 'certain ambiguities and what I think is a distortion of historical perspective'. He questions Herb's historical categorisation, arguing that the liberal period began in 1945, not 1950, and that his argument is therefore distorted, particularly concerning the behaviour of the 'administrators' and 'solidarity makers'. Anderson asks: 'Should we ask not why did it [constitutional democracy] fail, but rather why did it ever win so much acceptance?' Was it merely a blip in the wider, longer context of Indonesian history? He was in Indonesia doing research for his dissertation and later book, *Java in a Time of Revolution*, and the arguments in his review reflect his thinking and way of interpreting Indonesian politics at the time, which focused on the role of tradition and cultural patterns, elements of society that were 'momentarily put in the shade during the liberal period'.[28]

Herb credits this time with Ben in late 1963 and early 1964 as giving him a fresh perspective on Indonesian culture, language and nationalism, telling Kahin: 'He certainly has a wonderful feel for this situation, often as I disagree with his conclusions.'[29]

Assessing the power balance

In his writings from the 1963–64 trip, in place of his earlier assessment of Sukarno's fiddling while all about him burned, Herb took a new analytical angle. He sensed the possibility for change in the midst of the current crisis. Published with the cleverly explanatory title 'President Sukarno, the army and the communists: The

triangle changes shape', his conclusions about the outcome of Sukarno's current trend leftward in relation to this triumvirate in Indonesian politics is in retrospect quite chilling: '… the odds are that the Communist Party will have a difficult time after President Soekarno goes, that the army will emerge as the dominant political force and that it will treat the PKI as an enemy'.[30]

In this article, there is again evidence of Herb's good access and proximity to some key people in politics and government and of his rapport with those he meets, which allows his analysis to penetrate deeply into the social fabric in a way that had become characteristic of his writing. In his discussion of the extent of Sukarno's wide support for his shift towards the Left in both the international and domestic contexts, Herb reveals in one impressive sentence the many layers of complexity in political alignments at the time and his own highly developed interviewing skills: 'Thus one common pattern of conversation with high government officials is for anti-Communism to be expressed more and more strongly as formality gives way to frankness.'[31]

The influence of Ben Anderson on Herb during this trip was also significant. He wrote to Kahin in early 1964:

> I realise that I still haven't really written to tell you of my general impressions after the trip. It's partly that they are so confused still. In some ways I came home less depressed than I had expected to be. I'm sure it has a lot to do with Ben's influence on me, but why I'm not clear. Perhaps its now that I see the PKI as something of a hope …[32]

Thirty years later Herb described his position *vis-à-vis* the Left in politics as beginning to change around this time and again noted Anderson's influence:

> In some ways it is true that I was not a person of the left in any sense in those years [late 1950s–early 1960s], though I had quite a sense of affinity with New Left people I got to know in Canberra in 60–62. More importantly, Ben Anderson was already an important influence on me, especially after seeing quite a bit of him in Jakarta in December 63–February 64, the first time that I had seen him in Indonesia. And I prided myself on being fair to the Communists …[33]

Indeed, Herb's position on the Communist Party had shifted considerably in the past year. In mid-1964 he wrote Cliff Geertz: 'The Sukarno–Army–PKI piece is out of the way at last … in the August issue of *Asian Survey*. Writing it has made me more and more troubled about the question of whether one shouldn't see the PKI as the least of the available evils …'[34]

Reactions to Herb's article, particularly to its analysis of Sukarno's possible uses for and engagement with the PKI, were mixed. His views were roundly rejected by some of his closest colleagues both inside and outside Indonesia. Onghokham, a young historian at the University of Indonesia and friend, was compelled to write to Herb, rejecting the notion that Sukarno would negotiate with the PKI in such a way: 'I completely disagree with you about analysis that he [Sukarno] would plan the PKI to have a future and I find it difficult to argue through this letter for I do not know what makes you really write this article.'[35] As Herb explained to Dan Lev at the time,

> … it seems that Ong is rather upset about my *Asian Survey* thing, more than I had expected, though dislike of that particular line seems to me pretty well universal among the (non and anti-Communist) Indonesians whose reactions

> I've heard. It all raises rather acutely the question of what one should write on contemporary politics – if anything at all. Should one shut up and find refuge in non-political or non-contemporary subjects, or is that running away from the problem?[36]

Dan Lev too disagreed ferociously with the line Herb took in the article: that the PKI had garnered sufficient power in Jakarta to force such an outcome, hypothetical though it may be. As Ben Anderson observed, the 'Kahinians' were put on the defensive at this time;[37] Dan believed that his own government's continued insistence on the threat of PKI power and associated fearmongering about a communist surge in Indonesia were only fuelled further by such analyses as Herb's. But he was also very sympathetic with Herb's fundamental lament cited above: 'that is precisely how I feel: confused. Your comment on what should one write – and earlier on how much is expected of people studying Indonesia – really went to the heart and guts of things.'[38] As Herb had explained, he sympathised with the pressures his American colleague felt to ward off accelerating fears about the communist question in Indonesia:

> I must say I'm finding it a strain to be associating with government types who must necessarily see the PKI as the arch-enemy. It's easy enough to be agnostic on the point and on that basis to allow oneself to go along with this line of talk. But if it gets to the point where one insists on remaining confused in one's thinking lest one's agnosticism be shaken, it's pretty bad. What do you think? … On the other hand there are all sorts of reasons for being dubious about the PKI too, that is about the likelihood of its doing the hard economic and

> administrative things that need doing … And of course there are the philosophical questions about freedom and happiness to be faced too. What an enormous degree of tolerance of ambiguity we Indonesia scholars are expected to be capable of![39]

By 1964 the PKI had grown into a strong party with influence in elite Jakarta politics. The question analysts struggled with was whether Sukarno had successfully co-opted the party to the point that it was essentially 'caged in' and merely a pawn for his own use or whether it had the potential to take power on its own.[40] Western governments, fearful of the communist domino effect cascading through Southeast Asia, asked these increasingly urgent questions of their resident Indonesia experts, and showed little time for or sympathy with nuance and considered scholarly opinion.

Into West Irian

Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia brought Australia's diplomatic relations with its neighbour to an historic low. Nowhere were Australia's concerns and anxieties about Indonesia's expansionist designs felt more acutely, perhaps, than in Port Moresby in 1963–64. At the end of his two-month research trip to Indonesia from December 1963 to February 1964, in spite of his falling out with Roeslan and his uncertainty that he would get permission to go, Herb received his pass to visit West Irian. He planned then to continue to Port Moresby for a short stay as visiting lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea.

Since Herb's first visit to New Guinea in late 1961 a great deal had changed. The New York Agreement of 15 August 1962 between the Netherlands and Indonesia saw Indonesia's position in the province formalised; after which it immediately set about channelling vast resources and human capital into West Irian, as

it was now called. On this visit Herb's intention was to investigate the social situation and the local response to the proposed United Nations plebiscite, which, as required under the terms of the New York Agreement, was to take place before 1969. He discovered that Indonesia's integration project in the province was well advanced and that some of Indonesia's best and brightest bureaucrats had set to work incorporating it into the Indonesian nation. At the same time, as Herb was to discover on his trip, a sense of Papuan identity was gathering momentum.

When he reached Port Moresby after his visit to West Irian, Herb told reporters from several local and Australian newspapers that the general sentiment among Papuans was resentful of and disappointed by the Indonesian takeover of the province and the failure to meet their demands for a West Papuan state. It was not easy, he told them, for the Papuans to accept that they must regard themselves as Indonesians and admitted it looked as though the Indonesians were in West Irian to stay despite the promised 'act of choice referendum'. Mindful of his audience and in an effort to avoid contributing to the hyperbole and anxiety in Australia and PNG at the time about an aggressive Indonesia, Herb insisted that Indonesia looked as if it was intent on consolidating its position in West Irian, not expanding its territory further. To this end he mentioned the considerable investment Indonesia was making in the province. He cited government data on its financial contribution to Irian, especially its grant monies for training and higher education of students, which included a program for sending Irianese elsewhere in Indonesia. The Indonesians were also working, he noted, with the United Nations to deliver projects in agriculture, health, education and communication. Herb was quoted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying: 'It is sad to see Papuans disappointed, but at the same time I am

impressed by the real effort the Indonesians are making in West Irian.'

There was widespread suspicion and anxiety in Papua New Guinea about the implications of Sukarno's anti-British confrontation of Malaysia and this takeover of West Papua. An editorial in the Port Moresby newspaper *South Pacific Post* on 28 February 1964 rejected Herb's 'softer' or more balanced line on Indonesian foreign policy. Entitled 'Apologies for a villain', the editorial began: 'Visiting lecturer Dr Herbert Feith's impressions of Indonesia today will appear to those with a British democratic background as no more than apologies for a belligerent, deceitful villain.' As the editor, cognisant of the anxieties of his audience, pointed out, Herb had sought to assure them that Papua New Guinea and its colonial power, Australia, had little to fear from Sukarno and his confrontation, but he had not succeeded: 'Dr Feith, in his efforts to show how very much he understands the Indonesian viewpoint, almost painfully takes steps to ignore the mounting history of atrocious militance [*sic*] and trespasses of that country.' In contrast the *Djakarta Daily Mail*'s Port Moresby correspondent filed a story covering Herb's visit from an altogether different angle. Given the title 'An Australian impressed by I.B. development', the report focused on Herb's positive observations of the contributions Indonesia was making to education and other major projects in West Irian.

Soon after his return from Indonesia and PNG, Herb wrote a short essay about his visit to West Irian for the journal *Nation*. Written for an Australian audience, the piece is balanced in its treatment of both the Indonesian civil servants 'trying hard to do a good job in West Irian' and the sentiments of the locals whose sense of Papuan nationalism 'was clearly a more genuine and full-blooded thing' than he had expected. But he returned from the

visit aware of just how great the gap was already between these two sides; the Indonesians had clearly invested too much in the province to give it up, he concluded, and the passion within the urban population for Papuan nationalism, although potentially accommodated within the multi-ethnic Indonesian state, showed early signs of gathering momentum. For the local readership he predicted that West Irian 'could present us with some serious tests' in Australia's relations with Indonesia and also with the Eastern half of the island of New Guinea.[41]

From this experience as a public intellectual or commentator had arisen exactly the sort of confusion and misinterpretation Herb and his fellow Indonesianists in America and Australia had been grappling with for some years now. They faced the dilemma of whether to condemn Sukarno entirely and pander to Australia and other Western nations' branding of him and therefore of all Indonesia as reckless and potential enemies or whether to present, as much as possible, a more balanced view of politics in Indonesia, in spite of Sukarno. Although Herb's recent academic writing was perhaps his strongest yet in condemning the Sukarno regime, in February 1964 he was being branded an apologist for the very regime he had condemned.

The Benda debate

Herb Feith did not hold with the idea that the scholar's objectivity demanded detachment from their subject or, indeed, neutrality.[42] Throughout the course of his engagement with Indonesia he was keenly aware that he was not an Indonesian but a European, an Australian and a Westerner. As he came to learn in his first year in Indonesia, this meant that his response to the extreme poverty, inequality, suffering, corruption and abuses of power was framed

by different moral and historical perceptions. This did not mean, however, that he rejected his belief in a universal set of human rights. He also knew that many Indonesians shared his principles. In the early 1960s the tension between his identity as Westerner and his role as an observer of Indonesia were mirrored by the growing debate in the academy about the application of modernisation theory to the study of non-Western countries.

In 1964 Herb found himself at the centre of this debate when a review of *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* by Yale historian Harry Benda turned into a critique of modernisation theory, political development and structural functionalism and how to interpret Sukarno's Guided Democracy.[43] As one of the first American-trained political scientists to write a full-length study of Indonesian politics, Herb had taken a novel approach, and his book was released just as his theoretical approach came under fire from scholars in the humanities and social sciences. Faced with Benda's criticism, which in essence echoed that of his MIP colleagues including Anderson and McVey, and a growing discontent with this approach in comparative politics more generally, Herb defended his choice of methodology.

Benda identified the complex predicament before the foreign scholar: 'to examine Indonesia with Western eyes; or to be more precise and more generous, with eyes that, though increasingly trained to see things Indonesian, have continued to look at them selectively in accordance with preconceived Western models'. As Benda saw it, the Western analyst is trained to ask, 'What's wrong? … based on the unwarranted belief that all societies are essentially similar and that, allowed to develop "normally" they will (tautologically) follow a standard norm, that of the "West".'[44] Herb argued back, admitting that his own view was indeed a narrowly

framed cultural view of the Western impact on a non-Western country, which did not take into account the inevitable transfer of technology or Benda's own Java-centric view of Indonesian history. But he also objected to Benda's charge that he had taken an essentialist approach to constitutional democracy in Indonesia: 'far from treating the Western-modelled system as something "natural", I devoted a good deal of space to answering why it kept going as long as it did'.[45]

The crux of Herb's reply to Benda is indeed the crux of his long-developed and deeply considered approach to Indonesia in general.[46] Rather than take what he saw as Benda's minimalist position on comparative studies, Herb argued for engagement with useful comparisons among cultures and between the West and non-West, seeing it as a tool to be used together with historical narrative and alternative theoretical formulations. He thoroughly condemned the essentialist modernisation view as ethnocentric and horrifying, but was not afraid to defend his position and to bring methods, ideas and cultural norms from his own experience to his observation and analysis. In the late 1950s and early 1960s his research might have been framed in the comparative politics and modernisation theory paradigm, but his approach was by no means static.

Herb's reply to Benda came after he had presented a paper at the Australian Political Studies Association conference in Canberra in August 1964, 'Some political dilemmas of Indonesian intellectuals', in which he engaged with these issues more fully and attempted to critique the debate from the position of the Indonesian intellectual.[47] He argued that it was time for Western investigators to review the way they approached non-Western nations with its 'acceptance of a frame of reference determined by the investigator's nationality, and by his relationship, actual or

sought for, to the policy-makers of his own state'. In place of this frame of reference Herb argued that they should 'see themselves in the first instance as intellectuals, rather than Americans, Frenchmen or Australians, and that they should make serious effort to develop relationships of full understanding with intellectuals of the countries they are studying'.[48]

Since completing his dissertation Herb had continued to cast around for new theoretical and empirical insights. In reviews of books on comparative politics and related subjects written in 1963, he had articulated his continuing search:

> … the general theory we need for the politics of the underdeveloped countries will have to draw heavily on Marxism. But it will have to draw also on theories of socio-cultural change, of communication and consensus, of elite formation and not least of fanaticism and irrationality, the phenomena for which Marxism so clearly failed to find explanations in the case of the Nazis.[49]

On the specific point of the priority modernisation gave to economic development, which was embraced by Western aid programs so fervently at the time, he was indeed critical:

> But the conventional wisdom about economic development has still had far too few challengers. The declarations of Asian governments to the effect that they are acting with all determination to lead their countries to higher prosperity are still too frequently accepted at face value … May it not be good for our souls to inquire periodically whether the interests of our country are congruent with what we believe to be best for our neighbours?[50]

In the development of the field of Indonesian studies, the Benda–Feith debate is considered important because it reflected wider shifts in the study of the non-West and developing nation-states in the early 1960s. The debate also mirrored current disagreement within the study of Indonesian politics at the time on the question of whether the Sukarno regime was heading for collapse, which Herb depicted in a paper written at this time as between the proponents of two views:

> … the argument between proponents of the cataclysmic and continuity views has tended to parallel another argument between adherents to modernisation theory, who believe that industrialisation will require Asian societies to undergo a great many of the experiences which the West has experienced in the last two centuries, and others who condemn this view as parochial unilinearism and emphasize that the cultural and social variety of the world is likely to survive the industrialisation of the non-West.[51]

As flagged by comments in his 1963 review of Kautsky's *Politics of Underdeveloped Countries*, Herb's theoretical focus would borrow increasingly from neo-Marxist theory and new emerging paradigms on developmentalism and the divide between the First World and the Third World. He was drawn to working in a more comparative frame.

In mid-1965 Herb received an enticing invitation that seemed to fit very well with this direction in his research and teaching interests. It was an offer from Department of History and Political Science at the University of the Philippines in Manila, to take up a Rockefeller Foundation visiting professorship for a year. The opportunity to carry out new research in a new national, albeit

still regional context was greatly appealing, and both he and Betty were also excited by the prospect of living in Southeast Asia again and discovering a new country, this time with their young family. Herb was granted permission to take a year from his duties at Monash and set about making his plans to leave in September the following year.

SEVEN

Indonesia's cataclysm (1965–69)

> … the New Order's trajectory did not come out of nowhere. This 'Order' was not the antithesis of the political situation that preceded it, but rather its continuity.
>
> Mohamad, preface to *Indonesia in the Soeharto Years*.

IN THE MIDDLE of the semester, news reached Herb of the kidnappings of a group of generals who, it was alleged, had planned a coup to unseat the government in Jakarta on the night of 30 September 1965. The kidnappings were led by Lieutenant Colonel Untung, a senior member of the Presidential Guard. The homes of six rival generals, including the Chief of the Army, General Nasution, were raided. In the early hours of the morning, one general, Yani, and the daughter of another were killed. The generals, with the exception of Nasution, who managed to escape, were kidnapped and, it was later discovered, murdered at the

Halim air base on the outskirts of the city. President Sukarno was also taken to Halim, ostensibly for his own safety, although it is unclear whether he went willingly.[1] In the ensuing hours and days, particularly once news of the murders of the six generals got out, generals loyal to Nasution and led by General Suharto launched a counterattack on Untung's 30 September Movement. News detailing the grisly killing of the generals, which allegedly involved members of a communist youth group and the women's group Gerwani, quickly turned to allegations of PKI involvement.

The events of this night and the following morning have been documented in numerous official, academic and fictionalised versions. At the time, it was extremely difficult to grasp what was happening because Jakarta was quickly placed under martial law, and communication within the city and with the outside world was cut off. From Melbourne, Herb followed as best he could the cataclysmic events of 30 September 1965 and their bloody aftermath over the next few months, including the arrest and killing of hundreds of thousands of PKI members and suspected sympathisers. In his few existing letters from late 1965 there is little to indicate that Herb had more information than was published in Australia's daily newspapers, although there is evidence that he certainly tried to get further information.

Although the manner in which this power struggle was played out might have surprised Herb and his fellow Indonesia observers, the fact that it occurred did not. Like other Indonesia observers, Herb expected that the tense stand-off between the three pillars of power would spill over. In the article he published in *Asian Survey* in August 1964,[2] Herb had predicted that the PKI might succeed in gaining power, and warned of the possibility of violent reprisals at the hands of the military. From his only extant published contemporary commentary we can get a sense

of just how little he knew in the first weeks after the attempted coup. On 10 October Herb was interviewed on ABC radio, and the transcript was published a week later as a centrespread in *Lot's Wife*, Monash University's student newspaper.[3] Because he had no information Herb was noncommittal about where to place responsibility for the attempted coup, but he predicted a long-drawn-out period of violence between the government and the communists.

News reporting on the coup in the Australian news media was extremely limited and was also 'distorting'.[4] Indonesia scholar Richard Tanter surveyed two Melbourne daily newspapers from 1 October 1965 to 30 August 1966 and found very little mention of the events in Indonesia and almost no mention of the killings. The general sentiment in Australia accepted the elimination of Sukarno, whom they saw as a trouble-making despot, and of the dreaded communists. Tanter quotes Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt as commenting in a speech to the Australian–American Association in New York in mid-1966: 'With 500 000 to 1 million Communist sympathisers knocked off, I think it is safe to assume a reorientation has taken place.'[5] Following his research, the question for Tanter remained: where, then, were the Australian witnesses to the killings in Indonesia?

Herb had access to some alternative news sources, including newspapers from Indonesia that Monash University Library was receiving, and some international publications. However, in these he would have found minimal reporting on the killing of communists in Indonesia, let alone unprejudiced analysis. Newly returned volunteers, including George Hicks, who flew from Jakarta to Melbourne on the morning of 1 October, reported to Herb and the Monash group about the tense atmosphere and of hearing gunshots, and the letters of Solo-based Mary Johnson

later provided a rare eyewitness account of the unrest in Central Java. In the first weeks after the coup attempt, however, Herb remained largely in the dark, much as everyone else was. For Herb in Melbourne, with limited resources and means of obtaining accurate accounts, conclusions would need to wait.

Further impetus to seek better resources and understanding of events on the ground in Indonesia came just weeks after the attempted coup in the form of an invitation to Herb from Lucian Pye to write a book on the politics of Indonesia for the American publisher Little, Brown's series Comparative Politics, which Pye was editing with Gabriel Almond and Jim Coleman. Pye acknowledged that it was perhaps a strange and potentially difficult time to be embarking on such a work, but added:

> On the other hand, my feeling is that if you were to start on it about this time, you would find that the next stage of Indonesian politics would be taking shape pretty clearly before you were able to complete it and you would be able to come out with the first serious volume on Indonesian politics for the post coup period …[6]

As Pye further explained, the series was intended to contribute much-needed texts for the expanding area studies training courses and 'to bring some of the Southeast Asian countries into the mainstream of political science'. Herb's response was enthusiastic but qualified, and he listed a range of changes he would demand to the outline Pye had designed for the volume, to which the editorial team had no objection. By December they were in agreement that Herb would undertake the book; all that was left was to negotiate submission dates and a final contract. The pressing and urgent need for more accurate information about the

rapid and violent changes in Indonesia had begun to get Herb thinking again about questions of access: 'If this is indeed a new era in Indonesia, or could become one, is it not perhaps a good time to keep as much connections as possible with Indonesia?'[7] The fact was, however, that Herb, like most both inside and outside Indonesia, had little idea of the extent of the decimation of the PKI leadership or of the killing of its sympathisers.

In December 1965 Jeff Atkinson and Kevin Travers, Melbourne students and members of the AIAV, embarked on a trip to Indonesia with plans to travel through Java and on to Bali. It was their first trip to Indonesia, and they had been planning it for some time. News of the coup attempt and political unrest in early October did not deter them, and Herb gave them no indication when he spoke with them before they left that the situation might be difficult for foreigners. They were to take with them a box of medicines to Bandung, to a New Zealand doctor working on a scheme parallel to the Graduate Employment Scheme. At the last minute the Australians made the wise decision to request a letter from the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra to explain the package, lest there be confusion at customs on the way into Indonesia.

As had become customary for students and others in Melbourne with an interest in Indonesia, Kevin and Jeff sought Herb's opinion about whom they should meet and where they should go. Characteristically, Herb provided a list of names and addresses of people and occasionally also a letter of introduction. His only request was that travellers visit him on their return to report on what they learned. The letter Jeff Atkinson remembers most clearly was an introduction to the leader of the PKI, DN Aidit, whom Herb recommended they meet. It is unlikely that Herb had met Aidit, as his links to the PKI were not strong. He might have had a connection to Aidit, however,

through the contacts of his student Rex Mortimer, in the PKI, and it is also possible that they might have crossed paths in what was then the relatively small world of Jakarta politics. In sending the two Australians to meet Aidit, Herb was clearly motivated by his desperate need for information about what was happening in Jakarta, so that he could understand what the PKI's true role was in the events of 30 September–1 October, if indeed it had a role. We now know that Aidit fled Jakarta to Yogyakarta on 1 October and that he was dead some weeks before the Australians embarked for Indonesia, having been executed soon after his capture in Central Java on 22 November.[8]

From his Indonesianist friends in America with their superior resources – Ben Anderson has noted that thirty newspapers arrived daily at the Cornell Modern Indonesia Program – news began to trickle through, probably by late October, of mass arrests as the clampdown on PKI members and supporters took hold. Ben Anderson, Ruth McVey and Fred Bunnell, with George Kahin's encouragement, followed the events as closely as was possible from outside Indonesia, monitoring and analysing Indonesian newspaper sources, radio broadcasts and material from contacts in Washington DC and Jakarta. The trio rushed to piece together the events of 30 September and its aftermath. Was this really a PKI-backed attempted military coup, or was it all part of a masterful plot born of intra-military factionalism dressed up to make it look like a PKI plot, in order to justify the full-scale expulsion of this group from Indonesian politics? For the Cornell team, which included Ruth McVey whose research focus was the PKI, the theory of a PKI conspiracy with these generals did not add up. Moreover, the emerging stories and rumours of systematic arrests, brutal killings and large-scale violence were far out of proportion to the initial catalyst. They scrutinised news reports,

statements from military and political leaders, witnesses to the kidnappings of the generals and subsequent attacks on members of the PKI.

The wider Cornell network, including Herb, Jamie Mackie and John Legge at Monash, were in touch with Ben and Ruth from October until January as they proceeded with their research. As they wrote it up over the New Year period, Herb and probably others from this inner circle were consulted in long international phone calls to MIP. In phone conversations with Ben at this time, Herb challenged the preliminary conclusions of the Cornell team.

The Preliminary Report on the 1965 coup

In early February, Anderson, McVey and Bunnell distributed their 'Preliminary Report', marked 'for your eyes only', among a small network of trusted Indonesia watchers, including the group at Monash. Its findings ran counter to the official story then issuing from Indonesia and supported by such countries as the United States and Australia. In its opening lines, the report argued that the PKI's and Sukarno's involvement in the attempted coup and murder of the generals had been minimal and that they 'were more the victims than the initiators of events'. The events of 30 September were, they argued, the result of a struggle between factions within the armed forces and that 'The patent design of the Army was to place all blame [for the challenge on the government] on the PKI'. The Preliminary Report pointed to the anti-communist campaign launched by the army by 2–3 October, with massive raids against leftist elements and PKI property and the organisation of mass demonstrations calling for the PKI to be banned. On 20 October, with the exhumation of the bodies of

the murdered generals, a full-scale campaign to repress the PKI began. On the basis of the evidence they had, McVey, Anderson and Bunnell argued, most contentiously, that the 'Army coup' of 1 October and the 'anti-communist campaign' launched on 21 October, 'though intimately related, nonetheless form *quite separate* political phenomena'.[9]

Herb had not disguised his criticisms of and contempt for Sukarno's presidency, which in the early 1960s had led Indonesia down the path to becoming an international pariah and domestic chaos. He had argued this most forcefully in his essay for Ruth McVey's book.[10] Nor had he disguised his concerns about the possibility of a communist-led Indonesia and the potential for factionalism within the army to erupt. As witness and documenter of the period of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, Herb wished, of course, to see this system reinstated in a revised form. Anything else, whether it be a communist or military-led state, was destined to fail the people of Indonesia.

The conclusions in the Cornell trio's report, although identified as 'preliminary', were likely to be challenged. In a letter to Kahin dated 18 February 1966, very soon after receiving his confidential copy, Herb contested its findings, all the while recognising its importance: 'First of all the Preliminary Analysis alias Thriller. Strongly as I disagree with quite a bit of it, it is certainly tremendous stuff and opens a new page in the study of Indonesian politics.' The essence of his disagreement with the authors stemmed from his belief that 'PKI–Untung links can't just be assumed to be non-existent, that Sukarno's flickering health must have been a factor of enormous importance, and that army plans to organise some sort of provocation of the PKI were probably far advanced'.[11] Thirty years later Herb would reiterate this position: 'I was startled by the Cornell paper's exculpation of the party, and

I think unconvinced, but I am pretty sure that I shared the sense of outrage expressed within it …'[12] In his letter to Kahin, Herb referred to a short article he had recently written about the coup and killings, which he had posted to him the previous day, further indicating his different – albeit still preliminary – interpretation: 'As you can see from the article … I do not accept a good deal of that line – inasmuch as I have sorted out the immense confusion of my thinking on the whole subject …'[13]

A moral analysis?

The production of the Preliminary Report, with its highly inflammatory conclusions, at such speed, together with his own difficulty in gaining insight into rapidly unfolding events that were clearly of immense and historic importance and calamity, led Herb to reflect on his role and that of the field more widely. As he confessed to George Kahin in February 1966, his own thinking about the events remained 'massively confused'. His sixteen years of professional, scholarly and patriotic engagement with Indonesia, and the constantly competing tensions within his roles in relation to Indonesia and Australia, came together in a one-page essay published at this time in *Nation*, with the title, supplied by the *Nation's* editor, 'Killings in Indonesia: To moralise or analyse? A dialogue.'[14]

The essay is written in a Socratic style, commonly used in theological circles including the SCM at this time, and which Herb came to prefer increasingly in the coming decades. It consists of a dialogue between 'A' and 'B' about the coup and subsequent killings, in which 'A' makes a case for a more broadly humanitarian response while 'B' argues that the communists got what they deserved – undoubtedly the dominant view in the United States and Australia. As Herb told his friends, 'I certainly meant for my

readers to be convinced by the "A" case',[15] which was that, regardless of the politics of the victims, the mass murders should be wholly condemned.[16] As his conversations with the Cornell group during research for their Preliminary Report would have made clear to them, Herb was never convinced that the PKI had not been involved in the coup – at least not in the kidnapping and murder of the generals. In line with Herb's earlier predictions in his August 1964 essay in *Asian Survey*,[17] 'B' argued: 'There is no doubt in my mind that there would [have] been killing on at least the same scale if the PKI had come out on top.' To which 'A' replied: 'Agreed – and I would hope that neither of us would have hesitated to protest against it.'[18]

As Herb saw it, his essay was attempting to raise critical questions about objectivity, neutrality and detachment. Although he later admitted his regret at the editor's choice of title for the article and, perhaps, to some extent the methodology he used, he did not regret its intention. In response to Richard Tanter's quest to find the witnesses to the killings thirty years later, he told his friend:

> … your paper opens up guilt and anxiety creating questions of various kinds, above all how important were personal motives and Australian (or Australian establishment) considerations in leading me to the position I took in the months after 1.10.65 and have basically stuck with, that the increasingly rapid polarization and economic decline of 63–65 had created an impossible impasse, that breaking through that impasse was going to be nasty whoever came out on top, and that the Soeharto coup and the subsequent purges and massacres at least broke it.[19]

When he wrote the *Nation* article in mid-February and sent it to his Cornell friends, expecting their usual critique and possibly some help in getting it more widely circulated, Herb was entirely unaware of how they would read it and respond to it. Ruth McVey and Ben Anderson immediately saw it as an attack on their work in the Preliminary Report and, more importantly, read it as an apologia for the anti-communist purge still taking place in Indonesia. Their counterattack was painfully personal.

In a letter to Herb, dated 25 February, Ruth McVey, an astute and fluid writer, dashed off an acerbic and personally targeted response in verse in a self-confessed hot temper. She entitled the poem 'The Omlet-Maker's Song (To be sung in moments of flagging Enthusiasm by analysts of current Indonesian Affairs)'. The poem is a brilliantly constructed and intentionally cruel critique of what she depicts as amoral detached scholarship that dismisses the mass killing in favour of 'higher' science. It is also a personal assault, containing sardonic references to Herb's use of the term 'problem solvers' in *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia* and a reference to the apologists of Hitler's End Solution.[20]

On the same day in early March that Herb received Ruth's letter came Ben's response, which carried a message that was perhaps even more condemning. Ben's tone, although less sharp than Ruth's, conveyed an utterly crushing translation of the essay in order to demonstrate blatantly 'that you will be subject to very serious misinterpretation'.[21] Anderson then took what he called 'key excerpts' from the article and 'simply substituted different nouns and adjectives … while keeping the rest of your argument as it stands'. These nouns and adjectives so simply substituted were 'Berlin' for 'Jakarta', 'Communists' for 'Jews' and 'Third Reich' and 'Nazis' for the 'Indonesian Army'.

Herb and the Cornell Indonesianists were no strangers to debate, divergent views and differing approaches to their work. George Kahin had encouraged and promoted debate and diversity at CMIP because of their power to produce great research and analysis. Nevertheless, Herb was caught entirely off guard by these stinging personal attacks. How, Herb wondered, had these, his closest colleagues and dear friends, misunderstood him so grossly? How was it that he had explained himself so badly that he, a Jewish refugee from Nazi oppression, could be labelled an apologist for mass extermination and political repression? His reaction to the letters was such that, on 10 March, Betty Feith felt compelled to write to George to seek his advice and clarify Herb's position.

> Herb doesn't know I am writing you but I must. He's stunned at a recent letter from Ben and Ruth indicating their assumption that the aim of his article was an Apologia for Mass Murder. I'm stunned too. I just want to let you know that quite the reverse was the intention. The point of the article was a protest against the bland acceptance by the press here that it's OK to kill these people because they're Communist supporters. We thought this was 100% clear. Apparently it was not.[22]

Betty's compulsion to write to George was partly, she explained, because she herself had encouraged Herb to use the dialogue style. They were, she explained, trying to find a way to overcome the general apathy of the Australian public and encourage them to 'read to the end rather than just another protest of the kind that one ignores here in the press everyday … (particularly as Herb is rather prone to write such things)'.[23] As surveys of

Australian reporting of the attempted coup and subsequent mass killings in Indonesia after 30 September 1965 show, the coverage was minimal and critical analysis lacking. To put this in its context, in a similar survey of press coverage of the Vietnam conflict in 1965, arguably a much more pressing foreign policy and increasingly domestic policy concern for Australia at the time, reporting was 'low-scale' and 'biased' in favour of American successes. What analysis there was in the major dailies was grossly uncritical of the government's position.[24] As the author of this survey asked, 'How far was the Australian public made aware of the major problems associated with the Vietnam War?' The same question could be asked about newspaper coverage of the situation in Indonesia. The apathy of the Australian public was reflected in the Australian Government's lack of interest in Indonesia at the time. In mid-1966 a New South Wales parliamentary delegation to Southeast Asia visited Singapore, Malaya, Thailand, Cambodia, South Vietnam and Hong Kong, but not Indonesia.[25]

Undoubtedly, Betty's major concern when writing her letter was to alert George to the extent to which Herb was upset by the misunderstanding with Ben and Ruth, and, perhaps, she thought, with George, too.[26] Sadly, her hunch was right. On 14 March, probably before Betty's letter had yet reached him, George replied to Herb with apologies for his delay:

> I did read your piece through with care and, after some deliberation, concluded that it would not be worth my trying to get an American publisher for it. Frankly, Herb, I believe your presentation is blurred and even ambiguous – and that many readers are likely to conclude that your line actually is different from what, I am sure, you meant to convey. It is, I

> think, quite possible to read your piece and reach conclusions as to the author's intent that are pretty far from what I feel your intention was in writing the piece. If even people here at Cornell, who are fond of you and predisposed to be sympathetic towards your views, conclude on reading the piece that you are, in fact, evidencing a considerable callousness with regard to the killings, I am afraid others who do not know you might well all more readily come to the same conclusion.[27]

However, knowing Herb as well as he did, George was careful to explain that he also understood Herb's intent and the context within which he was grappling to work: 'Recalling the courage and humanitarian concern which you expressed so forthrightly a few years ago at the time of the oppression of the Chinese in West Java (when you wrote the letter to the *New York Times*) I found it impossible to conclude that you meant in any way to condone the recent mass killings in Indonesia.' He continued,

> It seems to me, then, that you have encountered the difficulty besetting so many of us of trying to reason concurrently with an untutored mass audience and with the politically informed and humanitarianly sensitive element which constitutes, unfortunately, so small a part of public opinion. I certainly have found it difficult, if not impossible, to do this with respect to American involvement in Vietnam, and I would imagine it would be quite as difficult to achieve this object with regard to Indonesia in the Australian milieu.[28]

This was not the first time George had cautioned Herb in this way. His earlier concerns about Herb's writings on Sukarno criticised him for letting his values impinge on the analysis. This

time the danger, as George explained it, was that Herb was swinging too far the other way, in that he was trying so hard to appease public opinion that he abandoned his values altogether. George's reference to the war in Vietnam and the fine balance he, as an intellectual in America opposing the war, had recently trodden, is important background to his own trepidations and those of Ben and Ruth about Herb's attempt at 'balanced' – albeit pro-human rights – analysis of the current crisis in Indonesia.

Herb's essay came in the midst of debate and disquiet raging within and across America's intellectual and government classes. As Noam Chomsky, writing for the *New York Review of Books* a year later about American intellectuals ('academic apologists') peddling untruths about the war in Vietnam, put it: 'It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies. This, at least, may seem enough of a truism to pass over without comment. Not so, however. For the modern intellectual, it is not at all obvious … The deceit and distortion surrounding the American invasion of Vietnam is by now so familiar that it has lost its power to shock.'[29] Relatively speaking, the anti-Vietnam War movement in Australia was in its infancy. As Herb commented at the time, the Vietnam debate was then largely confined to university campuses and church pulpits, and the general media and public sentiment followed the government line:

> As I see the situation, these newspapers (*Canberra Times* and *The Bulletin*) are afraid of the 'teach-in' procedure, because they know that the govt's position will almost certainly lose out, however equally balanced a slate of speakers is as between pro-government and anti-government men. The fact is that the volume of dissatisfaction and disquiet about the government's policies, and the American policies, in Vietnam, is very great in

> the Universities as it is in the churches … The other thing that seems to me to come out of the whole episode is that this issue has generated enormous moral passion on both sides. Not in the community as a whole of course. But in the community of people interested in international affairs …[30]

Indeed, the type of public debate that Chomsky refers to, involving the wider public and media and academics seeking the 'truth' and those following the government's line, was only just beginning in Australia. But the debate was already well under way in universities in the United States when Herb's *Nation* essay landed on the desks of his friends at MIP, and no doubt infused the context within which McVey's and Anderson's bitter reproaches arose.

Betty's letter to George shed light on what she described as Herb's 'hectic summer' of nonstop work, which had led once again to his mental and physical fatigue: 'Herb hasn't been very fit – a recurring throat infection is always pulling him down … I'll have to try to get him to sleep more, worry less. I've been trying for over twelve years now!'[31]

Herb's long struggle to balance the scholarly need for dispassionate analysis with the deeply emotional and engaged connection he felt for Indonesians and victims of oppression had led to this – his own personal cataclysm. The effect on him was profound and ultimately concerning for those to whom he was closest. The conundrum for Herb since his first engagement with Indonesia was precisely around these questions: to detach as observer, or to engage deeply, morally and emotionally with the subject. He increasingly knew that answers to his questions would only be found in Indonesia, but his commitments in Melbourne meant that he could not go there for some time. In the meantime, Herb

continued to wrestle with his reply to Ben and Ruth. A few weeks later, a visit from a young Englishwoman woke Herb from his introspection and depression and provided him with a much-needed course of action.

Taking action

Bridget Mellor worked in the London headquarters of Amnesty International (established in 1961) and, on a private visit to Australia, had been asked by Amnesty founder and President Peter Benenson to uncover what she could about the arrests and killing in Indonesia and get some views on whether it would be appropriate for Amnesty to send relief aid to the families of political prisoners. Herb was one of the first people she called on, and he was immediately energised by her visit.

On 29 March Herb dashed off a letter to Ben and George: 'It was a sock on the jaw that you and Ruth gave me, Ben, but it was probably a very good thing. I have a long unfinished letter of reply to your two letters … But this note is of more immediate importance …'[32] Suddenly his angst was pushed to the side. There was action to be taken.

Organisations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, established in the early 1960s, came about at the height of a Cold War complicity whereby, as Michael Ignatieff explains it, 'the West agreed to keep silent about human rights abuses in return for Soviet cooperation in the maintenance of geopolitical order'. This collusion presented conditions in which civil society organisations came into being with the purpose of challenging this 'conspiracy of silence'.[33] They used letter writing and petitioning as their weapons and engaged ordinary people from across the world.

After Herb's first meeting with Mellor, they met several more times, including Jamie Mackie and Bruce Grant, former Asian correspondent then Reader in Politics at the University of Melbourne, in some of their meetings. Together the group sought to design a course of action for Amnesty to take in the first instance. They agreed that the first step should be to ascertain what was happening in Indonesia, particularly with regard to political prisoners, and decided it would be useful to send an official representative to Jakarta on Amnesty's behalf. Their preferred candidate was George Ivan Smith, an Australian recently returned from being the United Nations Secretary-General's representative in East and Central Africa and Regional Director of United Nations Technical Assistance Programmes in Central Africa. When Herb approached Smith, who was then in Sydney, with their proposal he was supportive of the plan, but was also about to return to the United States. The alternative, the group decided, was to send Bruce Grant, who had close relations with Nasution and Roeslan Abdulgani, on a mission that Herb described as 'a low-posture representation attempt'.[34] Grant's trip was ostensibly to collect material for a revised edition of his book *Indonesia*, although, as Herb admitted to George and Ben, 'the principal aim will be to see what he can do to persuade people that Indonesia's efforts to regain a good name in the non-Communist world would be more likely to succeed if there was evidence of some attention being given to due process in relation to those currently in jail'.[35]

Herb quickly engaged the help of his friends at Cornell. He asked Ben and George to make contact with Peter Benenson, who was due in New York in the coming weeks, and with George Ivan Smith. As Herb well knew, George Kahin's capacity for networking of this kind was highly developed, particularly in these early days of the war in Vietnam. In the coming months and years, this

connection between Mellor, Kahin and Feith became an active working group that aimed to draw the world's attention to the plight of political prisoners in Indonesia and to find much-needed aid for them and their families.

By mid-April, when Herb finally posted his full letter of reply to Ruth and Ben's rebuttal of his essay, his mood and outlook on the situation in Indonesia were altogether different from what they had been when he had written the article and when he had begun the letter a month earlier. His letter, written over the course of a month, was deeply reflective and thereby revelatory.

During the same month, news had also reached Herb by way of an Australian journalist in Jakarta, Frank Palmos, about a close friend of the Cornell circle, the young University of Indonesia historian Onghokham, who disappeared in the first months of 1966. Palmos was able to confirm that Ong was in detention. Although Herb did not know that Ong had been a source of research material for the Cornell team's Preliminary Report, he suspected that his arrest was somehow related to the report's release.[36] In his letter to Ruth, Ben and George, Herb suggested some sort of petition for his release, proposing that they look into the possibility of his going to Cornell as a means of escape: 'It is not out of the question that we could get scholarship funds to bring him here, and get them fairly fast, but Melbourne would of course be second best, or third or fourth for Ong.'[37]

In his reply to his Ruth and Ben, Herb accepted responsibility for the *Nation* article and its mistakes, but he also shed light on his own struggles about how to pursue his scholarly and activist roles. He confessed to what he called 'visa cowardice'; that is, the need 'to protect my entrée and that of my students'.[38] In an indication of the extent to which he had distanced the emotion he initially felt upon receiving their letters, Herb also included several pages

of detailed notes and technical comments on the Preliminary Report. For them both, Herb's generous and engaged reply was a relief. As Ben told him, he had regretted his earlier letter as soon as he had sent it and told Herb so in his reply: 'I have been feeling terribly frustrated … feeling quite helpless about doing anything, and the result of this is that most of my sense of frustration was deflected quite thoughtlessly onto you.'[39]

Bruce Grant's three-week trip as an unofficial Amnesty emissary was not a great success. He failed to gain access to most of the main players, and even old friends were reluctant to speak. The atmosphere in the weeks immediately after Sukarno's official replacement by Suharto was fiercely closed; previously willing informants were frightened into silence. He didn't return to Melbourne completely empty-handed, though. He had managed to meet Sultan Hamengkubowono and Adam Malik, two key figures in the so-called triumvirate of power that had challenged Sukarno. (The third member of the triumvirate was General Suharto himself.) These men gave Grant a figure of between 150 000 and 200 000 political prisoners in detention at the time. They indicated that they would not obstruct efforts to provide food relief to prisoners and their families, but gave the clear message that there was nothing anyone could do about the continued detention and rounding-up of PKI prisoners. Grant's advice to Herb, Mackie and Mellor was to 'adopt a quiet pressure approach rather than one of protest at this time'.[40] They decided the best strategy would be to engage the assistance of Red Cross International, the World Council of Churches, Oxfam and other relief organisations and that they should keep their activities in Indonesia quiet, as he told George Kahin, 'lest the Indonesian government decide that it won't accept any outside aid for the prisoners'. Grant had also managed to visit their friend Onghokham

in jail where he found the young historian in dire circumstances.

Meanwhile the need for information about what was happening inside Indonesia and inside the prison camps in particular was increasingly urgent. International opinion had by now largely accepted the massacres of communist elements in Indonesia as collateral damage and felt more comfortable with the newly installed Suharto leadership. As a correspondent for the US magazine, the *Nation*, stated in November 1966:

> The non-communist world may be relieved that Indonesia has been rescued, on the brink, from communism. And, by now, thanks to Radio Jakarta and the controlled papers, most Indonesians may share this view without knowing why. But the truth is that the abortive coup, whatever it was, the awful massacres, Sukarno's containment and the new army regime have left Indonesia very much as it was before. With, however, one important difference: there now is hope.[41]

Grant's experience confirmed for Herb what he had increasingly believed: that he must get to Indonesia himself as soon as possible, ideally for a considerable length of time. It was clear that it would take more than a few weeks to come to a deep understanding of what was taking place there. In the back of Herb's mind was his existing commitment to spend 1967 in Manila at the University of the Philippines. Rufus Davis had already agreed to his time away from Monash, but Herb now knew that he must spend that year in Indonesia. He just needed to work out a way to make it happen.

In addition to his concerns and preoccupations with the condition of the political prisoners, Herb had also become deeply preoccupied with the situation of the ethnic Chinese minority in Indonesia. Ethnic Chinese Indonesians became a focus for attack

very soon after 30 September. On 2 October 1965 all Chinese-language newspapers were shut down, and Res Publika University, sponsored by the Chinese mass organisation Baperki, was burned down on 14 October. By the end of October Baperki had also been banned and party members and affiliates jailed, because it was 'alleged that Baperki had financed the PKI in cooperation with the Chinese People's Republic'.[42] In April 1966 the ruling authorities began to take over Chinese-language schools and soon after imposed a ban on Chinese community organisations. This followed the closure of Chinese consulates and departure of diplomats from the People's Republic of China as a new wave of anti-China protests took hold, including the 'Anti-Peking' marches on the Chinese Embassy in Jakarta led by the student groups Indonesian Youth and Students' Action Front (*Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia*; KAPPI) and the Indonesian University Student Action Front (*Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia*; KAMI). By May such were the anti-China and anti-'Chinese' tensions that China offered to send ships to enable Chinese nationals to 'go home'.

Beginning in May 1966 and continuing for the next eighteen months, Herb wrote, in collaboration with graduate student Charles Coppel, a series of reports on the situation of Indonesia's Chinese minority. The reports were based largely on Indonesian newspapers and Australian and other foreign newspaper reports collected by Charles at Monash as well as information from Herb's friends and colleagues in Indonesia. Charles sent the reports to Herb's network of fellow Indonesianists around the world, and to contacts in international aid organisations and journalists. Herb concluded his June 1966 essay with a call for action:

> Large as the gaps in my knowledge of the actual situation are, I think I am warranted in reaffirming my earlier conclusion

> that there is a real cause here for concern by international organisations. There is no doubt that there are many thousands of Indonesian Chinese, of both categories of citizenship, who will have to leave Indonesia soon and would much prefer not to go to Communist China.[43]

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Herb also sent a copy of the *Nation* essay to his old friend, Nugroho Notosusanto, now head of history at the University of Indonesia (UI) and Assistant Rector in Charge of Student Affairs. As McGregor and McVey have documented,[44] the UI campus at this time was dominated by the anti-communist student groups Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (HMI), the Muslim student organisation and Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia, the Catholic university students' association. In the late Guided Democracy period Nugroho was also a key member of the Armed Forces History Centre and an important contributor to its recent publication *A Concise History of the Armed Struggle of the Indonesian Nation* (1965), considered an anti-communist rendition of this history.[45] Under Nugroho's direction, in late 1965 the Armed Forces History Centre published the army's first official version of the coup attempt of 30 September–1 October, describing it as a communist plot (*40 Hari Kegagalan 1965*). Through his role as Assistant Rector in charge of student affairs at UI, in early 1966 Nugroho played a key role as go-between for KAMI, the emerging student movement agitating for Sukarno's resignation led by one of his students, Soe Hok Gie, and the military.

Another of Nugroho's brightest students was Onghokham, about whose fate Herb and his American friends were increasingly concerned. In May 1966 Nugroho replied to Herb to thank

him for the article, mentioning in particular the situation of their mutual friend. 'Yes, the situation is pretty tough, although personally it has meant liberation in many senses for me. For Ong, this period was his first experience in moral conflicts, and he was indeed in bad shape mentally before he disappeared. But he is home again now.' Nugroho then went on to make a case for his own decisions following 30 September 1965 and his association with the student movement calling for Sukarno's resignation in early 1966:

> For me, the choices are not hard to make. After all I have acquired a certain toughness during the years of political attack. And yet I have felt a touch of disappointment at witnessing what I would call a certain 'shallowness in personality' with several of my colleagues at the UI. It is so easy to be courageous when the bullets are no longer flying and the enemy is already down on his knees. And how disconcerting to find more maturity with the students than with their teachers! Owing to my job I have witnessed the student actions from very near and have learned to admire their courage, their endurance, their sense of mission. It reminds me of Ortega y Gasset's 'the generation *in form*'.[46]

Nugroho remained in his roles at the Armed Forces History Centre and at UI for more than twenty years and received several military promotions, eventually to brigadier general in 1971.

Searching for answers

It could be said that the outbreak of mass murders, about which, admittedly, he had very few facts at the time, did not confound Herb Feith, for he understood the compulsion to political violence. By

mid-1966 Herb was in contact with Miriam Budiardjo, then head of the Politics Department at UI. Herb and Miriam had known each other in Jakarta in the early 1950s. Miriam was Soedjatmoko's sister and wife of Ali, a former diplomat to the United States and India during Indonesia's revolutionary period (1945–50) and government minister under Sukarno. In the late 1950s she studied at Harvard University and so was one of the wider circle of Indonesians studying at US universities in the late 1950s.

In mid-1966, when Herb enquired about spending a year at UI, Miriam did not need persuasion and let Herb know that she would be extremely pleased to have him teach in their Politics program. What is more, he would do it for a local salary and staff accommodation package. Herb carefully and apologetically extricated himself from his earlier commitment to the University of the Philippines and secured his own department's approval to teach and research in Indonesia instead; the first six months of which were to be sabbatical leave and the remainder of the year leave without pay. The Feith family wasted no time. They departed for Jakarta as soon as the academic year ended in early December. David was about to turn ten, Annie was seven and Robbie just four years old; it was Betty's first visit to Indonesia since her brief stay there in August 1957.

As they made their plans, a letter arrived from Cliff Geertz at the Committee on the Comparative Study of New Nations at the University of Chicago, with a flattering and exciting offer.

> … there is a possibility of a permanent position for you here if you are interested. It is only a possibility but it is a real one, and both Lenny Binder who is Chairman of the Political Science Department and I have been working on it for some time. And *if you are interested*, we might bring it off.

> That is why I am writing: to see if you are interested at all or whether you are bound to Australia permanently … The Pol Sci Dept and the New Nations Committee – as well, perhaps, as the History Department – could however pay your way over here for about a month to 'look you over' if you are interested in the job.

The position was a Ford Foundation-funded chair in South East Asian Studies, possibly to be held jointly between History and Political Science. Geertz added, 'I don't think I need to say how much I personally would like to have you as a colleague: I was the one that started all this locally so far as you are concerned.'[47]

Perhaps at another time, Herb would have eagerly accepted the offer to work with Geertz and his colleagues in America, although, characteristically, he expressed his doubt that he would indeed be up to the job. Nonetheless, this was not the first job offer or invitation to apply Herb had received in recent years. A few years earlier, in 1963 he was invited to apply for and almost assured a position in the Department of Political Science at University of California Berkeley, replacing Guy Pauker when he took full-time employment with the RAND Corporation. Again, in 1965 he received two further offers, one from J.W. Burton at University College, London, to take up a five- to ten-year position in its Department of Overseas Development, and another from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for a two-year stint teaching its Southeast Asian politics course. He had declined each of these offers because of his commitment to Monash University, where the future for Southeast Asian studies had great potential, and because of his family ties to Melbourne.

In responding to Geertz's enticing offer, he cited the pull of family obligations, commitment to what he was contributing

to building at Monash and, in the short term, the need to get to Indonesia as reasons why he must turn it down. Although he was certain about his decision to go to Indonesia, he expressed his despair to Geertz about Indonesia's current situation and his trepidation:

> Weep indeed, about Indonesia. I'm finding myself increasingly torn between heart and mind as I contemplate this coming trip. Though I cavil about some of the arguments that Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey are putting forward, their hold on my political feelings is powerful. The Subandrio trial, the stories of the Gestapu prisoners camps, the things that the mobs and panglimas are doing to the Chinese, and the rapidly rising levels of hypocrisy about the New Order (Orba!) – it all makes me feel pretty uneasy about teaching political science to KAMI kids (and KAMI-intimidated ones) in Djakarta.[48]

Inside Indonesia

The Feiths took up residence in staff accommodation at UI's Rawamangun campus in January 1967. The size of the young family and Herb's standing as a foreign scholar meant that they were allotted two small bungalows, each with no more than a bedroom, a small kitchen and living space, in spite of Herb's insistence that they be treated as local staff. Even with two bungalows space was tight, especially as a steady stream of guests – friends, volunteers, foreign researchers – regularly called on them. Herb taught two politics subjects in first semester, but apart from this his time was largely his own. With little room to spare, the children at home, and inadequate office facilities at the university, Herb rented an office where he could work uninterrupted. So secret

was the location of the office that not even Betty was entirely sure where it was, recalling only that the office was far enough away for him to go there by bus, rather than on his bike.

Returning together to Indonesia for the first time in more than ten years, Herb and Betty set about reconnecting with their old networks. They immediately sought out Djaelani and invited him to join them at Rawamangun to take care of household duties and four-year-old Robbie, when David and Annie were at school. Through her friends from their volunteer days, Betty had arranged to take on work at the Indonesian Council of Churches (GKI), so the arrangement with Djaelani was perfect. Djaelani's tin recycling business had all but collapsed by this stage, and he was no longer physically capable of doing hard work on the road gangs. Betty and Herb grasped the opportunity to rekindle their friendship with Djaelani and to fulfil their promise of more than a decade earlier, for him to join them in their home again. Betty encouraged Djaelani to bring his younger children with him to Rawamangun where they played with Robbie while Djaelani cooked and attended to his other duties. Once again, Betty and Herb were from the beginning of this arrangement acutely aware of the implications of their eventual departure for Djaelani. What would he do then? Most importantly, they wanted to leave him in a better situation than they had done in 1956.

As members of staff, the Feiths had access to a university car for family outings. Betty seized upon the idea that she should teach Djaelani to drive, thereby opening up possible employment opportunities for him after they left. When Herb set off to his lectures or office for the day, Betty gave Djaelani driving lessons around the staff compound. By the time they came to leave in December 1967, Djaelani was a licensed driver and, with the Feiths' help, had found employment as a driver at the US Embassy.

The camps

Herb and Betty also reconnected with their old friend Tina Franz at GKI. For Herb this connection was critical for his efforts to investigate the situation of the estimated 200 000 political prisoners in camps across the country and about which the outside world and Indonesians knew very little.[49] Information gathered by volunteer graduate Lance Castles late the previous year from his conversations with their mutual friends, including Australian Embassy staffer Murray Clapham, British-born economist Carmel Budiardjo, Andrew Gunawan and student activist Soe Hok Gie, gave Herb some idea of who was in detention and the state of the prisons. As Lance wrote to Herb in September, 'Conditions are far worse at Tanggerang [Tangerang] where many have died of starvation … They looked liked Auschwitz victims …'[50]

Journalists and observers were prohibited from entering the camps, but the GKI were permitted to send delegates into the prisons with food and other supplies. Soon after arriving, some time in early 1967, Herb began to accompany the GKI representatives to prisons around West and Central Java as a fellow delegate distributing basic foodstuffs and other supplies to the prisoners. Incredibly, given the extent to which the prisons and the fate of their inmates were concealed, he discovered that once inside he had access to considerable data and to some key personnel.

Herb maintained his close relationship with Amnesty International through Bridget Mellor, passing her regular reports of his observations of the camps, the situation of the Chinese Indonesians and general politics through Charles Coppel in Melbourne. In these first months, Herb wrote a piece, which Bridget helped him publish anonymously in *The Times* in London on 20 March. Given the title, 'Aftermath of the coup that failed: Indonesia's Gestapu prisoners still live in hope', and the by-line, 'From a

Correspondent lately in Indonesia', the article was picked up by the *Australian* and Melbourne's *Sun* newspapers. Herb described the dire conditions in the camps: 'In Tjilatjap, on the south coast of central Java, prisoners are said to be dying at the rate of one a day … Only a tiny number of the many thousands crowded into this old and ill-equipped gaol receive additional food from members of their families, and eyewitnesses report that many of the inmates look like Belsen survivors.'. About the New Order under Suharto's leadership he sounded a warning: 'The fate of 200 000 all but forgotten political prisoners will stand as one measure of his success.'[51] On a more personal level, Herb also discovered that his old friend, Pak Kromo from Pendoworedjo, who in 1957 had been juggling his Javanese mysticism with his role as a local communist leader and father of baptised Catholics, was among those detained as a communist sympathiser.

The level of access Herb had to the camps through the GKI was rare for the time. His observations, however limited, were of critical importance, for very little information about the political prisoners was getting out. George Kahin had accepted Herb's invitation to join them not only in raising the profile of the treatment of the prisoners but also in finding international aid to get supplies to the camps. Because of its proximity to Jakarta, Herb had access to a prison camp in Tangerang where thousands of prisoners languished in particularly dire conditions of near-starvation.

> The Tangerang jail some 20 miles out of Djakarta is by all accounts particularly bad. A report carried by the official armed services journal *Angkatan Bersenjata* (July 9, July 16) conceded that the funds allotted for food there was far short of what would be required for a daily rice ration of 0.4 kilograms, to say nothing of other needs. And, as most of the

> inmates are from far away areas, little is sent in by members of their families. The jail buildings at Tangerang are old and dilapidated, and the 2500 or so inmates are crowded together in highly unsanitary conditions … Beating of prisoners during interrogation is common practice … In the words of one former Tangerang guard, an army NCO, 'One is made to treat the Gestapu prisoners like dogs.'[52]

With the help of George in Ithaca, Charles in Melbourne and Bridget in London, Herb's anonymous reports were distributed to international aid organisations including Amnesty, Oxfam, the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers), the World Council of Churches and the Salvation Army. The objective was primarily to keep them informed about the situation of the political prisoners, in the hope that they would contribute aid for their assistance. To avoid attracting adverse attention to the organisations from the Indonesian Government, Herb offered to act as intermediary to distribute funds in Indonesia.

Such actions were not without personal risk. By late 1967 tensions between Islamic and Christian groups over the issue of aid provision in the camps were high. Islamic groups accused foreign-financed Christian organisations of proselytising among the political prisoners, with some justification. As George Kahin explained to potential international aid donors in December, 'This situation has become acute enough so that in some areas of Indonesia churches have been attacked and burned down and physical strife has developed among religious groups.'[53]

In such an atmosphere, the position of GKI in relation to its work in the camps came under considerable scrutiny, as did Herb's involvement. George Kahin stressed to his Oxfam contact the risks Herb was taking and implored him to maintain the utmost

level of confidentiality: '[Do] whatever you can do to insure that neither he [a colleague of the recipient] nor the Salvation Army bring Dr Feith's name into the picture … As Mr Feith has been willing to risk his professional career in such a humanitarian manner, I think it is essential that he not be required to run more risks than absolutely necessary.'[54]

Indeed, getting his findings out of Indonesia to his wider international networks, while protecting his position and that of the organisations in Indonesia sponsoring him at the time, UI and GKI, was tricky. With both the reports on the situation on the Chinese and the political prisoners, the solution, designed with foresight before his departure, was to post material intended for wide distribution back to Charles Coppel, who was planning a master's degree on the problems of Indonesia's Chinese. From there Charles collated and distributed the material to a long list of contacts Herb had left with him. The list included Indonesianists in Australia, the United States and elsewhere, and such organisations as Amnesty International and a committee established in the Netherlands by Wertheim, who were actively raising the issue in Europe.

At this time, Herb and Betty called on the wives of political prisoners, including Carmel Budiardjo in her home in Jakarta. Carmel was an Englishwoman married to Budiardjo, a senior bureaucrat. They had both been detained in the wake of the coup, and in 1967, when Herb and Betty were living in Jakarta, Bud was still in prison. Herb had most probably been introduced to the couple through various intersecting circles of acquaintance, Molly Bondan and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where Carmel had worked as an economic adviser to the former government and through her position as Dean of Economics at Res Publika University (by then renamed Trisakti University). Carmel was

also very well known for her columns in several newspapers in the late Guided Democracy era in which she commented on the economy. Herb's visits to the Budiardjos were most probably to find out as much as he could about Bud's experience in the camps, and about the sort of assistance required from the outside world. Little did they know, although Carmel and Budiardjo were undoubtedly aware of the possibility, that they would both be detained the following September, 1968.

Meanwhile, in his office and at home in Rawamangun, Herb focused on documenting daily political events with the intention of writing a complete account of this period. He met and spoke with old contacts when he could, although many were now outside the system, shut out of the 'new order' of Indonesian politics of centralised authority and puppet parties while others were becoming deeply co-opted within it. As he explained incisively and succinctly in a letter to Charles, a familiar combination of highs and lows accompanied his investigations: 'MPRS [Provisional People's Consultative Assembly; *Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat*] all very exciting. The aftermath dull and depressing: economic stagnation and army irresponsibility.'[55]

Mounting concern about anti-Chinese sentiment

Herb's deep concern for the situations of the political prisoners and of the Chinese continued through the updates sent to his international network. Not only were there mass expulsions of Chinese and violence in rural areas but also the government was discussing the possibility of reinstating the PP10, which banned the Chinese from operating business in rural areas nationwide. Betty's boss at the GKI, Mary Sorongan, an Australian married to a Menadonese, was particularly concerned about the Chinese Indonesians. On a visit to Australia Mary was to have discussions

with authorities about the possibility of Australia taking some Indonesian Chinese immigrants, in which she stressed their professional skills and the capital they would bring with them.[56]

As news spread through Herb's NGO and friendship networks of his work on the political prisoners or 'tapol' (*tahanan politik*), as they had come to be known, several people sought his help to escape from Indonesia. One of them was Lie Han Koen and his wife Lien Lie, whom Herb and Betty had met through Carmel Budiardjo. Lie Han Koen was Carmel's colleague at Trisakti University and had been, under the Sukarno administration, a government-appointed liaison officer between government and the Chinese business council. Lien, a lawyer, had worked for the last four years of the Sukarno government as an assistant to the cabinet minister Oie Tjoe Tat, a prominent member of Baperki. In early November 1965 leaders of Baperki, including its chairman, Siauw Giok Tjhan, were arrested. A few months later, on 21 February 1966, following a hostile campaign by KAMI protestors, Oei Tjoe Tat was also detained. Although Lien was given another position in the civil service under the new administration after a period of re-education, in early 1967 she felt her position was still precarious. The couple had received threats and feared for their lives.

The mass killing and detention of PKI members and supporters had extended to Indonesia's small but highly visible ethnic Chinese minority. Having been prevented from doing business in rural areas in some parts of the country by the PP10 regulations of 1959, most of them lived in the cities. Consequently, ethnic Chinese made up only a small proportion of those targeted and killed in the anti-communist purges, which were at their most brutal in the countryside. However, in the early period of New Order rule, anti-Sinicism took on an institutionalised form. When

it came to power in March 1966 the Suharto government purged the political parties deemed sympathetic to the PKI, including the pro-integration ethnic Chinese organisation, Baperki, and imprisoned its leaders. Through 1966 and 1967 the government passed a series of laws restricting the expression of Chinese identity and banning the use of Chinese script, cultural practices and festivals. At the same time, military commanders, particularly in East Java, North Sumatra and West Kalimantan, led local campaigns to expel ethnic Chinese, who were considered foreign nationals even though their families had settled in the archipelago long ago, in some cases several generations back, and force their repatriation to China. In West Kalimantan the situation was especially concerning, as reports that reached Herb in Jakarta and Charles in Melbourne in mid-1967 gave accounts of '350 000 Chinese … placed in controlled areas', which China's Hsinhua News Agency described as concentration camps, around the cities of Pontianak and Singkawang.[57]

In October and November in what is known as the Dayak demonstration, Dayak groups drove more than 53 000 ethnic Chinese from their homes in the area between Pontianak and the Sarawak (Malaya) border, murdering hundreds and pillaging their belongings. The Dayaks were seeking revenge, it appeared, after the murders of twelve Dayaks by guerrillas from the communist-led Sarawak People's Guerrilla Force (Pasukan Gerilya Rakyat Sarawak; PGRS), which was made up of young Chinese from Sarawak and operated along the border. Contemporary observers suspected that it was no mere coincidence that the area in which the 'demonstrations' took place was the same area local military officials had earlier wanted cleared of Chinese. Herb reported from Pontianak in November, 'There are few Chinese left in the rural part of the province …'[58]

For Han Koen and Lien, the threats to their personal security came from many sides. Their ethnicity – their Chineseness – heightened by their close association with Baperki, made them very vulnerable. In early 1967 they began to look for ways to leave Indonesia. Carmel Budiardjo suggested that they approach Herb, who immediately saw a possible solution for the couple. He had already given some thought to the plight of his ethnic Chinese friends, including Onghokham, now safely at Yale University, thanks in part to his friends in Australia and the United States. As he had done in Ong's case, Herb would try to use his influence as an Australian professor to bring Han Kun, and perhaps others too, to Australia as students. Han Koen and Lien needed no persuading and immediately put together an application for Han Kun to complete a Masters degree at Monash under Herb's supervision. The fact that Han Kun was an engineering graduate did not deter Herb, a political scientist, from commending him to the university authorities. Herb's action was swift and proved to be effective. Han Kun was accepted as a postgraduate at Monash and thereby obtained the necessary visas for him and Lien Lee. In March 1968 they arrived at Melbourne's Essendon Airport, where they were greeted by Herb and Betty. Herb's care in undertaking his various activities in Indonesia had paid off. In the coming year visa applications for several students and researchers attached to Monash were to be approved.

Sudisman on trial

In June and July 1967 something of a Cornell MIP reunion took place in Jakarta. Ben had arrived not long after Herb and George, and Dan Lev and Don Hindley followed soon after. Obviously pleased to be surrounded by his friends, Herb also took comfort from the fact that they, particularly Ben and George, whose

closeness to the Preliminary Report was now open knowledge, were permitted to enter the country. The group met regularly at the café at the Hotel Indonesia in downtown Jakarta, a popular and prominent location, no doubt making themselves easy targets for intelligence agents interested in their discussions. In July, Ben Anderson was one of a few foreigners permitted to attend the trial of Sudisman, the only surviving senior member of the PKI Politburo. Ben sought permission for Herb to accompany him to the trial, which was granted.

At the trial they heard the condemned man deliver his eloquent final statement, titled 'Analysis of Responsibility', in which he criticised the PKI's own failings. As Carmel Budiardjo later explained, it was a powerful and affecting testimony:

> One can only admire Sudisman for the dignified way in which he criticized himself and others before a court which he knew was about to sentence him to death and which he regarded as unlawful. He must have seen this as his only chance to use a public platform to get his message across to the nation as a whole. It was an attempt to shield the mass of party members from the retribution that was being visited upon them. By that time, however, hundreds of thousands had already been killed.[59]

Also at the trial was Australian Angus McIntyre, who recalled his impressions of how profoundly affected Herb appeared to be by Sudisman's statement and by the experience of watching a man sent to his death for his ideological commitment, which was unwavering to the end.[60]

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Before returning to Melbourne in January 1968, Herb embarked on a tour of eleven camps for political prisoners in Java and West Kalimantan. In an article written in Pontianak for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Herb reported that 51 500 Chinese refugees were still housed in the camps in and around Pontianak, Singkawang, Mempawah and Bengkajang in West Kalimantan. In what was a rare report from the camps, Herb described the conditions, 'In the camps I have seen in the Pontianak area conditions are grim … overcrowding is extreme, and most refugees have only those clothes they are wearing … In the places I visited there was rice with a tiny amount of meat for one of the two daily meals …'[61]

As he was by his visits to camps in Java, Herb was deeply moved by the government's blatant disregard for international conventions, by the injustices he witnessed and, especially, by the suffering endured by children: 'I saw some terrible examples of infants with large stomachs and matchstick-like legs. Of the eight or nine who are dying daily in the camps around Pontianak, a high proportion are small children.' Herb took David along with him on a few of these trips out of Jakarta (although not into the camps), and they proved to be a particularly important time for both father and son. Given Herb's fairly hectic travelling schedule and the crowded conditions at home, they had little time together. David, now 10, was tall for his age even in Australia and all the more so in Indonesia. He had suffered taunts in the schoolyard because of his size and, unlike Annie, had not made great friends with the other children living at the Rawamangun campus. On these expeditions with his father, David was invited into a man's world of drinking coffee and smoking *kretek* (clove cigarettes), late into the night, although he was little aware of the troubles and horrors of which they spoke.

Returning to Australia

In early 1968 Herb returned to Monash and to his now considerable circle of eager and capable graduate students, many of whom were at the point of embarking on fieldwork in Indonesia. One of the first to do so was a German student, Ulf Sundhaussen. Ulf had met Harry Benda in Germany in the mid-1960s and asked the historian to recommend where he should go to write a dissertation on Indonesian politics. Benda pointed him towards Herb, who was then still in Jakarta. Ulf's correspondence with Herb was positive and effective, and he arrived in Melbourne in early 1966. Although Ulf intended to pursue a research project related to Indonesia's politics, Herb had other plans. The German had a background in military history, and Herb encouraged him instead to research the Indonesian army, a vital pillar in the political configuration of the time. In early 1968 Ulf arrived in Jakarta to begin his field research just as Herb departed. Charles Coppel was also about to embark on his fieldwork for his dissertation, an account of the perilous situation of the ethnic Chinese in the 1960s. Stuart Graham and Rex Mortimer were working on theses on the student movement and the Indonesian Communist Party respectively.

Herb's personal and professional relationship with Rex, a former barrister and a member of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) who was in his early forties, was emerging as a profoundly important one. Rex was a prominent figure in the Melbourne University student corps in the mid- to late 1940s and joint editor of the student journal, *Melbourne University Magazine (MUM)* in 1948, Herb's first year at the university. Rex and his co-editor Joan Thwaites launched the 1948 edition with a clear objective: 'Our departure from the trend of 1947 edition may be detected in the greater topicality of many of this year's articles,

and in the breach of that scared illusion, impartiality.' In an edition that included an article from Jim Cairns, then a lecturer in the university's Economic History Department, entitled 'Peace or War?', the editors continued: 'Dispassionate analysis has traditionally been considered the role of the university student and lecturer. But the latter cannot now avoid being citizens as well.'[62] In 1957 Rex travelled to China as the CPA delegate for a nine-month study tour. He was also editor of the CPA Victorian branch weekly, the *Guardian*, in the early 1960s, before he began a Masters degree at Monash in 1965.

Herb had, for the time being at least, found outlets for his activism while protecting his access, and that of his students, to Indonesia. Nonetheless, when he was in Indonesia in 1967 he found that his careful networking and knowledge of the bureaucracy already had limitations. Months of effort to track down and support a visa application for Melbourne University student Jean Taylor had borne fruit in the end, but he was under no illusions about the prospects for his own students' future applications. Herb advised Charles Coppel in December 1967, 'It seems highly advisable that you could come the tourist visa way if you can … having seen how completely unwilling the relevant authorities are to pass on papers or take any initiative … I'm inclined to think you'll find it difficult to get anywhere in the required time …'[63]

As the institutions of military and intelligence gathering became more established and their power became more extensive in the years to come, his activist position, until now carefully balanced and partially disguised from Indonesian authorities, would be harder to maintain. Moreover, he would find such an approach less and less satisfactory. As Herb would later admit, before the mid-1960s 'it is true that I was not a person of the left in any sense in those years'.[64] From this time onwards, the

influence of friends and students and the changing world situation led him to shift his outlook.

The work

In 1968, back in Melbourne, Herb published two articles from his year's work in Indonesia. They were very different from his earlier writings in their approach and content. Unlike his informative yet openly critical analysis of the Guided Democracy years in his early 1960s publications, in his article 'Suharto's search for a political format', first published in the May–June 1968 issue of *Australia's Neighbours* and again in *Indonesia* in October, Herb took a much more subtle approach in his critical comment on the government of the day. Writing about the period from March 1966 to March 1968 and the sessions of the MPRS that he had observed up close, Herb took the transference of power to Suharto and the army as a given. He mentioned neither the events of 30 September 1965 nor of the annihilation of the PKI. He referred to the 'military's high-handedness' and the government's 'tough' response to protests at the March 1968 MPRS session. Perhaps finding shelter behind quotations from others, he cites the government's tactics in words not his own but of others, such as journalist Rosihan Anwar's 'steamroller' and 'bulldozer'. He tackled Soedjatmoko on the idea that 'minimum coercion' is necessary in a culturally inherited political plurality, pointing out that the 'more recent legacy' of bureaucratic power also serves to maintain such plurality and that it cannot be controlled through coercion of the citizenry. He concluded that he would have to 'wait and see' just how far the government would bargain and how much it would rely on coercion in dealing with civilian groups.

In this article, we also see evidence of Herb's new use of, perhaps even reliance on, the insights of other scholars in this

now considerably expanded field of Indonesian studies into some of the key political players and themes. Among these scholars were Angus McIntyre, now at Yale University, on the PNI, David Penny on the economy, Dan Lev on party politics and volunteer graduate and medical doctor David Mitchell on the communist purges.

At the same time as Herb was writing this article, he published an altogether different piece in *The New Republic*. 'Indonesia – Blot on the New Order' should be read, and was perhaps intended to be read, as a companion piece to 'Suharto's search'. It is a personal account of his research into the plight of the GESTAPU–PKI prisoners in Indonesia, including his visits to eleven camps and prisons in Java and Kalimantan in November and December 1967. In contrast to the other article, it opens with the mass murders: 'the slaughter of well over half a million people in the anti-Communist holocaust which followed the abortive coup of October 1965'. It presents raw, first-hand accounts of conditions in the camps, the lack of food and medical care and the use of forced labour in the camps, and argues that the real number of prisoners far exceeds official figures provided by the Indonesian Government. Herb was attempting to draw to international attention what he portrayed as a 'blot' on the New Order's record, which at that point had its positives: 'by comparison with the Sukarno years, government management of the economy is impressive'[65] and the political situation far more stable. Most importantly, however, he sought to counter the 'almost complete' silence within Indonesia on the conditions of the jails and camps.

What was his thinking behind constructing two such very different pieces? Was it his way of separating his analytical self from his moral self? The 'Suharto Search' article would be the last of this kind he would write for a long time. The *New Republic*

article, however, marked a decisive and deliberate moment in Herb's evolution as scholar-activist. Indeed, there is no evidence of 'visa cowardice', the term he used about his approach to writing the *Nation* article in 1966,[66] to explain his need to maintain his access to Indonesia.[67]

In mid-1968 Herb was contacted by Ed Snyder, the Singapore-based Director of the Quaker International Conferences in Southeast Asia, inviting him to act as Dean at a conference to be held in Jakarta. As Dean, Herb was invited to suggest potential participants and thematic content for the fortnight-long gathering of young Southeast Asians, including students, academics, civil servants, people working in media and development. The conference was given the theme 'Youth and developing societies: Expectations of the 1970s'.

Herb was ready with a list of potential Indonesian participants.[68] Top of his list was Soe Hok Gie, a writer and now assistant lecturer in History at University of Indonesia and chair of the Arts Faculty's student council, who had been active in student protests to unseat Sukarno a few years earlier but had remained critical of the new regime.[69] Herb described him to the organisers as 'a very remarkable young man … [who acted in] defence of a variety of unpopular causes … [and was] controversial, but regarded even by his colleagues as honest and courageous'.[70] Among his other suggestions were Nurcholish Madjid, chairman of the Islamic student organisation (Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam Indonesia: HMII), lawyer Buyung Nasution and academic Tapi Omas Ihromi, both of whom he had known as students in the United States. The conference was held in the last week of September and the first week of October. The final list of forty or so attendees did not include Soe or Madjid, but Herb made new friendships with the Indonesian students Marsillam Simanjuntak

and Dawam Rahardjo, as well as Mochtar Lubis and a Malaysian, Anwar bin Ibrahim.

The length of the conference and the manner of its programming – a great deal of discussion in small groups and daily silences – were entirely stimulating for Herb and for all participants as they contemplated such questions as: 'What are the major problems and opportunities confronting youth in developing societies in the coming decade? What is the function of national identity in the development process?' At plenary sessions experts gave lectures to assist the discussions. Herb's was on 'A political science perspective on economic development in Southeast Asia'. The majority of participants were Indonesian, but others came from Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Laos, Japan and Australia.

In his letter of thanks to Herb, in which he included the completed conference report, Ed Snyder remarked that in the process 'we have been reminded again just how much your presence made the meeting a success. The combination of academic excellence and personal interest in each seminar participant is rather rare.'[71]

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In late 1968 Herb was promoted to Professor in the Politics Department at Monash, which meant that he also shared the chairmanship of the department with Rufus Davis. The department at this time had an academic staff of sixteen. It remained very much the younger and smaller sibling of the Economics Department, which had an academic staff of forty-seven, including seven professors. Herb's personal profile, publication record and popularity as a teacher meant that his appointment to a professorship was welcomed by his colleagues.

His promotion coincided with Jamie Mackie's move from the University of Melbourne to become the first Research Director of the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) at Monash University. This signalled further the university's increasing strength in this field and its attraction for graduate students and scholars from around the country and overseas. For Herb, John Legge, Jamie Mackie and others around the CSEAS, this was an exciting time of new research from graduate students and high enrolments in their undergraduate courses.

By now Herb had in his stable some highly motivated and capable graduate students. His visits to Indonesia in 1968–69 were as much to see them in the field as to do his own research. Harold Crouch, who had taken over from him at the University of Indonesia in 1968, Charles Coppel, and Alan Smith were working on the military, Chinese Indonesians and questions of development. They would brief him on their work, findings and observations, and he would encourage, suggest and guide. Herb's higher-degree students became another vital source, particularly for insights into groups to which he had difficulty gaining access, such as the military and the PKI, and he came to rely on them increasingly. Monash was quickly becoming widely known and well regarded as a centre for research relating to Indonesia; there was a lot at stake.

The profile of these experts on Indonesia attracted the keen interest of government agencies, notably the Department of External Affairs and ASIO, as prospective informants on Indonesian affairs. Some time in 1968, Herb was approached by a government official from the Key Points Intelligence branch with a subtle invitation. The officer described the meeting as 'short' and assessed Herb's reaction once he understood why he was there as 'uncertain and hesitant and in no way hostile', revealing that

Herb's 'only spoken reservation was "a moral obligation to the Indonesian government" (this proved to be the education authority for whom he had worked professionally)'.[72] Herb's association with Rex Mortimer since the mid-1960s had perhaps aroused ASIO's interest in him, and there was some confusion within the agency about whether or not Herb, like Rex, was pro-communist. For his close friends and family, such an assertion was ludicrous, although, as Herb wrote later, his experiences in Indonesia and more widely had shifted his position so that he saw 'the Western struggle against communism in global perspective' and was 'more interested in utopian projects, less inclined to see them as naïve and likely to lead to tyranny'.[73] By early 1968 ASIO had concluded that Herb's writings and statements that referred to communists in Indonesia demonstrated that he was, indeed, not pro-communist.

As Herb took on the added pressures of his professorship and of his increasing profile in Indonesian studies in Australia, his own scholarly position became conflicted and ultimately confused. These were years of increased uncertainty for scholars in the field of Indonesian studies and Third World studies more broadly as the political and economic conditions in these countries and paradigms about how to study them changed radically. As Dan Lev described it, 'Political change was rapid, and ideological change dramatic …'[74] With the changing times came a need for new perspectives, fresh ideas and ways of interpreting the world. In the fallout from the modernisation debates of the early 1960s and from the conflicts in Indochina, emerging new theory about the Third World, based in anti-establishment and peace paradigms, grew in popularity in Western scholarship.

Ever in search of new insights and surer than ever of his own activist trajectory, Herb engaged with the new scholarly

approaches. In the coming years, the field of Indonesian studies and the increasingly challenged area studies could no longer provide him with the answers he needed. Indeed his questions were no longer compatible with those of that field. Fourteen months of intense emotional and intellectual engagement with Indonesia also took their toll on Herb's health in the coming year.

PART 4

EIGHT

The professorial years (1969–77)

> All of us learned in the 1970s that living with integrity involves living in protest and living in openness to change.
>
> Herb Feith, 'Towards a new peace movement'.

> Turmoil and change, not stability and continuity, make for debates over analytical approaches.
>
> Dan Lev, Introduction', in Anderson & Kahin, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics.*

SOME TIME IN the summer of 1969–70, at the annual Australian Student Christian Movement retreat, Herb was recommended an essay written by the radical Viennese-born American resident, Catholic theologian and priest Ivan Illich. The essay, entitled 'Outwitting the "Developed" Countries', was published in the *New York Review of Books* the previous November, not long

after Illich's suspension from priestly duties on the basis of criticisms he had made of the Pope's latest missal opposing contraception. In the essay Illich argues that the 'modernisation' programs implemented by Western agencies with their associated technology and institutions, were doing more harm than good in Third World societies: '… the plows of the rich can do as much harm as their swords … The family car cannot drive the poor into the jet age, nor can a school system provide the poor with education, nor can the family icebox insure healthy food for them.'[1]

He called for the West to examine what it could learn from these peoples, rather than always seeking to impose its ways on them. Illich was already a well-known renegade figure within the American and South American church. In 1961 he established the Centro Intercultural de Documentación (CIDOC) in Cuernavaca, near Mexico City, initially as a centre to teach Spanish and prepare new church workers from North America for their service in Latin America. By the late 1960s CIDOC, which Illich later described as a 'thinkery',[2] had evolved into a centre for intellectual pursuits more generally, not only for men and women of the cloth. As Illich describes it, the Centre was 'a free club for the search of surprise, a place where people go who want to have help in redefining their questions rather than completing the answers they have gotten'.[3]

In an attempt to deal with the increasing uncertainties within Third World studies and the study of political systems other than those of the Western super powers at this time, in 1969 Herb had begun teaching a new subject, the Politics of Modernisation, in place of his Comparative Politics course. He visited Indonesia at the end of 1969, but really only to see his students currently in the field, including Charles Coppel, Stuart Graham and Alan Smith. He did not have research objectives of his own for the trip. Herb

Feith's introduction to Illich and his radical alternative views on the world system, technology, schooling and especially the relationship between the First and Third worlds was like a lightning bolt of recognition and illumination on his own progression in thinking. This was precisely the sort of 'big idea' he was looking for.

Writers' block

Over the preceding twelve months, the pressures of teaching and extra administrative duties that came with his professorship and a declining sense of direction in his Indonesian research meant that Herb failed to meet writing deadlines and became unable to commit to new ones. In late 1969 he declined a request from Ben Anderson to contribute to a Cornell MIP symposium reflecting on the study of Indonesia. When Ben suggested to him that a paper he had drafted earlier in the year titled 'The study of Indonesian politics: A survey and an apologia' could be expanded for the resulting publication, Herb replied,

> I've not been able to do anything about a completed version of that apologia paper of mine … I did mean to, or at least half of me did. But the combination of time pressures with not being quite sure that I could handle the bitter debate of the 1966 thing honestly was decisive. Maybe the present version will be useful …[4]

Ben and others at CMIP published Herb's unfinished piece, without expansion, in their collection of contributions, which were selected for their influence and reflection on the field of Indonesian studies.[5] Herb's contribution, a work in progress, started with

a clear incisive argument about the approaches Indonesianists have taken to the work up to the late 1960s then descends into a list of points that are not elucidated. Herb had been preoccupied for several years with writing, with former volunteer and Yale graduate Lance Castles, *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*, which involved selecting, translating and annotating excerpts from key writings and speeches from politicians and intellectuals in twenty years of Indonesian nationhood. Including more than a hundred excerpts, the summary biographies of the forty-nine authors and a comprehensive glossary of terms, this book was intended as, and indeed became, a vital resource for students of contemporary Indonesian politics. Herb had commenced the project soon after finishing his dissertation but, as the political situation grew ever more tumultuous and the key political figures changed, the project dragged on and the book was not completed and published until 1970.

Herb and a growing number of activists continued to follow the issue of political prisoners from Australia. International attention had begun to turn to the issue especially following the arrest in September 1968 of Carmel Budiardjo and action on her behalf by groups in Britain. One of his few publications at this time was a piece on Indonesia's political prisoners in *The Australian*.[6] The inclusion of his unfinished essay in the CMIP compilation is, nevertheless, evidence of the continued enthusiasm and encouragement from his friends and colleagues for him to continue writing and publishing. Herb's difficulty in meeting publishing deadlines was not new to his colleagues, who had such high regard for the quality of his analysis that they continued to approach him. Publication of *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, which Kahin had pushed along at a great pace to meet a tight deadline, was fraught with delays on the part of

Herb, who often required some stern words from his mentor to get him through. As he prepared his contribution for Ruth McVey's volume *Indonesia*, his relationship with his editor was similarly exasperating at times. However, it was perhaps the case of the book Herb was invited to write for the Little, Brown Series in Comparative Politics, edited by Almond, Coleman and Pye, that truly signalled Herb's self-doubt about his Indonesia work and the theoretical basis on which it rested.

When Lucian Pye wrote to Herb in October 1965, inviting him to write a volume in the series on Indonesia. As they both saw it, the book had the potential to be 'the first serious volume on post-October 1965 Indonesian politics'.[7] Over the course of the next year, correspondence negotiating the parameters of the book and timeframes shuffled back and forth between the two. Pye agreed to Herb's proposed changes to the form and structure of the book, which, as one in a series of country studies, needed to conform more or less with others in the series, and to March 1969 as the deadline. However, in early 1967, after Herb had failed to sign and return contracts sent to him twice, the editors reluctantly found a replacement author. When Herb, then in Indonesia, finally replied to the editors in a letter detailing his plans for and excitement about the book, Pye was devastated to have to relay the news of their decision. Herb's long silences had left them with no alternative. Pye encouraged Herb in his writing plans, nonetheless, replying: 'there is a desperate need for books on Indonesia right now and you should not feel too distressed. I am the one who feels most disturbed …'[8] Herb admitted to Pye in his reply,

> I was initially sad to have confirmation that you have now made another commitment in relation to the Indonesia

> volume, but am now relieved. The pressure to write early on post-coup Indonesia might have been quite a burden. On the other hand I do still plan to write something general on this subject at some point in the next three or so years …[9]

There were also opportunities to embark on other new projects with his colleagues and students at Monash. In 1969 Jamie Mackie and Herb secured a government-provided research grant for a project on the politics of administration and current political trends in Indonesia. The funding was sufficient to employ a research assistant, recently arrived Chinese Indonesian Andrew Gunawan, whom they had brought to Australia on a student visa. By giving Gunawan an income and purposeful work for a time, Herb and Mackie thought the research funds well spent. Neither of them, however, found they had the time to make use of Gunawan's research and, once again, no significant writing resulted from the research grant.

Once again there were indications that the combination of the work pressure arising from his administrative responsibilities and his deeper ideological dilemmas were affecting Herb's health. In particular, in the preceding months in late 1969, a bitter division within the department following the announcement of and call for applications for a lecturer position for a Southeast Asia area specialist, had put Herb in a very uncomfortable position. Rex Mortimer, on the verge of completing his PhD and already with an offer to teach in the Department of Government at Sydney University in 1970, applied for the position, undoubtedly with Herb's encouragement. For Herb and others who supported him, Rex was the perfect applicant. When Rex was not selected, some suspected that Rufus Davis, with whom he is said to have had an antagonistic relationship, had blocked his appointment.

Herb and others on staff in the Politics Department made attempts to argue Rex's case with Davis, but to no avail. The conflict took its toll on Herb. As he had been for several summers, Herb was depressed and ill over the Christmas break. Added to this was his despair at the sudden death on 16 December of Soe Hok Gie, who had visited Melbourne a year earlier and shared Boxing Day dinner with the Feith family.[10] This summer the anticipation of his increased responsibilities, as he readied himself to become Head of Department for a two-year term from January 1970, no doubt added to Herb's anxieties. Coping with the added responsibilities and with personal tragedy would also mean that finding time for his research was to prove even more difficult.

Leading the department, 1970–71

Being head of department in an Australian university in 1970 was particularly challenging. Student activism on Vietnam and calls for a revision of academic assessment procedures were reaching a climax. After the largely unilateral and conservative headship of Rufus Davis, students and some staff members in the Politics Department were full of hope and expectation as Herb assumed his leadership position. For the students, in particular, here was someone who understood them and with whom they could speak. To the students, Herb was a fellow-traveller. Indeed, around this time Herb made changes to his lifestyle that reflected the baby-boomer counter-culture of his students in the early 1970s. He grew a beard, turned to vegetarianism and relinquished his car in favour of a bicycle. Although this excited his students and drew others to him, it made some of his peers

uncomfortable. More conservative members of faculty and the university hierarchy found Herb's inclusive style of leadership, together with his bicycle riding and casual dress even at formal events, at best as curious eccentricities and at worst as niggling frustrations when it came to university protocol and business.

Following the lead of student politics in American universities, one of Herb's early initiatives as Head was to invite a student representative to attend departmental meetings and take part in decision-making. For some staff in the department it was a radical and unwelcome change. Ever the democrat, however, Herb worked hard to achieve consensus in the department on matters of conflict, often despairing at the inability of all sides to achieve it. This pursuit of consensus-driven leadership weighed heavily on his energies and workload as he engaged in long negotiations and mediations with his colleagues from opposing sides on various departmental issues. Moreover, on top of his heavy administrative load, he also had intensive teaching commitments. Nonetheless, Herb had his successes, too. As Chair, he supported Max Teichmann's new third-year subject Theories of Peace and War, which was first taught in 1972. As early as December 1965 he and Max, then only new in the department, had talked about working on a course related to peace research ideas.[11]

Teaching Southeast Asia

In his first year as Head of Department, Herb continued to teach his Indonesian politics course and coordinated a fourth-year subject, Politics of Modernisation, examining the current and contentious theoretical work of Almond, Pye, Huntington and Geertz. The popularity of Asian studies, which was introduced

at Monash as an Arts major and included languages and subjects from different departments in 1965, especially with a focus on the nations of Southeast Asia, was at its height in Australia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The war in Vietnam and conflicts and regime changes in Cambodia and Indonesia focused Australia's attention on the region and motivated students to learn the languages, politics and cultures of its nations. New graduate students from around Australia keen to work on Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia, were particularly attracted to Monash and its Indonesianists or Southeast Asia specialists, who, in addition to Herb, Jamie Mackie and John Legge, also now included Cyril Skinner, Lode Frank Brakel in Indonesian and Malay language, Milton Osborne (Cambodian history), Astri Suhrke (Thai politics), Michael Swift (anthropology) and Ailsa Zainu'ddin (education). The graduate students were radicalised by the late 1960s anti-war and anti-establishment movements. At Monash they found not only fertile ground for pursuing their Southeast Asia interests but also an environment supportive of a more radical brand of politics and world outlook.

In Herb they found a mentor who embodied both these passions. On 8 May 1970, in his address to a graduation ceremony in his role as Chair of the Politics Department, Herb called for the students and their families to join him afterwards in marching in the Vietnam Moratorium. The Moratorium was the first of three organised by the Victorian Moratorium Committee and its leader, Jim Cairns, in 1970 and 1971, calling for Australian and foreign troops to be withdrawn from Vietnam and for the National Service Act to be repealed. An estimated crowd of 70 000 to 100 000 people joined the protest march into the centre of Melbourne, culminating in a sit-down protest on Bourke Street.

If Herb's support for students' rights and past agitation on

issues including Vietnam had not already done so, his invitation to the graduates to join him at the Moratorium, issued at the most revered of the university's rituals, announced him to the university community as an activist. For his family and teenage children in particular, this is remembered as a moment of recognition and pride. The Feith family, led by David, the eldest, had long opposed the war and protested in other ways. As a student at Melbourne High School, David had been suspended for distributing anti-war leaflets to fellow students at the school gate. The leaflets were critical of the school's cadet program, which David argued was preparing students for war. Rather than punishing him for his suspension, however, Betty and Herb had applauded their son for his actions.

In the background to this series of professional highs and lows was the recurrence of Herb's mother's illness in February 1970. This time a secondary cancer was discovered in her brain. Unlike when she was first diagnosed with breast cancer in 1958, treatment was not an option and, after a pain-filled few months, Lily died on 15 July. His mother's death, preceded by such suffering, caused Herb to write to George Kahin in June, 'I have become more actively concerned than ever with the need for reform in relation to euthanasia.'[12] Her death was a shocking loss for Arthur and Herb, and for Betty, who had grown extremely close to her mother-in-law. Lily's lightness and warmth provided the perfect counterpoint to Arthur's sometimes cool and abrasive manner. The extent of Herb's responsibilities at work, both administrative and teaching duties, and at home over the next eighteen months, and his concerns about his father meant that the impact of his mother's death on him was delayed. In the following year he continued to have a considerable teaching load and his activist commitments did not let up, either. As his ASIO file notes,

Herb was one of several academics, including Max Teichmann, who spoke at a forum sponsored by the Monash Student Union on the Indo-China war and conscription on 25 June 1970.[13]

These demands and the tragedy of his mother's illness and death affected Herb's general well-being, mentally and physically, over the next two years. In notes he wrote to himself in the opening days of 1971, Herb details his despondency, his sense that he had lost his intellectual edge and his fear that his students had outgrown him. This extremely private and internal struggle coincided with his recurring bouts of illness and depression over the past three summers. In January 1971 he asked himself, 'Am I heading into crisis? Have I been heading this way for a long time? Are things getting unstuck all over the place? The way I've been sickly for three consecutive summers is a bad sign – the summers are the time when work hasn't been as immediately pressing – am I feeling the effects of them?'[14]

He questioned his overall professional direction, expressing this in terms of 'the frustration of my limited abilities. I've been thrust into the narrow specialisation because of the desire to be effective, to do something worthwhile. But it's certainly time to stop in my tracks and ask which way I should turn – which may mean getting away from the professional specialisation for a while. Or more immediately getting out of the professorship.' Demonstrating a complex level of self-insight, Herb was aware that his current depression could simply be explained as a clichéd midlife crisis, as he was 'Turning 40, [and] worry about being imprisoned in my professional role and rank … Insufficient charisma, wondering whether growing my hair longer isn't a superficial attempt to recapture youth and vigour. Being in a rut.'[15]

His graduate students at the time found that their supervisor was often absent. Herb was now and then unable to give his

lectures, handing them over to his tutors, most times because of a sore throat. As one put it, Herb seemed to be addicted to the cough lozenge Throaties. As well as struggling to complete his own work, although he continued to inspire their passions and interests, his graduate students began to find Herb less helpful in guiding them in finishing theses; there were always more questions to ask and fewer answers to them.

By the end of his two-year term as Head of Department, although it had been rewarding in some respects, the responsibilities of his leadership and administrative roles and the death of his mother had left him desperately in need of retreat and revival in body and in mind. In 1972 he would take twelve months much-needed sabbatical. Herb's tenancy as Chair of the Politics Department coincided with a radical shift in his impressions of Indonesia's future. In the space of just two years Herb's position moved from one of cautious optimism about Indonesia's future to a sense of its total hopelessness.

New Order tightens its grip

In February 1969, returning from a visit to ANU, Herb had confessed to finding himself 'seized by the distinct optimism among the Indonesia economists there'.[16] At this time there was indeed some room for optimism in terms of Indonesia's economic recovery over the past couple of years. The economy had at last stabilised, and inflation had retreated from average yearly highs of almost 200 per cent in the 1960s to a yearly average of 15 per cent in 1969.[17] This year marked a turning point in Indonesia as the New Order introduced its inaugural Five Year Development Plan (Replita I), which launched the New Order's development agenda, to be funded largely by foreign investment. Herb's

optimism after his visit to the ANU economists was nevertheless short-lived. This economic agenda was coupled with a plan to cement the Indonesian Government's control over West Irian, which it had occupied since 1 May 1963 after seven months under UN administration,[18] and to rein in the old political parties in the lead-up to elections planned for July 1970.

The Act of Free Choice (AFC) plebiscite on the West Irian issue was held under the supervision of the United Nations in July 1969 with international backing. It was conducted over six weeks in July and August 1969 and involved 1022 Indonesia-nominated representatives voting on behalf of all Papuans (a population estimated to be 800 000). During this time, an estimated 6000–10 000 Indonesian troops were deployed throughout the province. Not surprisingly, the hand-picked local elites voted unanimously in favour of joining the Republic of Indonesia. The US Embassy in Jakarta conveyed its concerns that the process was deeply flawed but advised President Nixon to avoid the issue during his visit in July.[19] By November both the United States and the United Nations had given their support for the process and backed its result.

At this time, the New Order's hold on centralised power was strengthening. In November the government introduced an election law stipulating that after the coming elections the MPRS would be dissolved and a new People's Representative Council or parliament – Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) – would be established. It would consist of 360 elected and 100 non-elected members. The 920-seat People's Consultative Assembly – Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR) – would be made up of the DPR and more than 200 military and functional group appointees. Under the new law, the government would directly appoint 22 per cent of the parliament and 33 per cent of the MPR. In the

lead-up to the 1971 general election, civil servants and members of the military were pressured to join the party in power, Golkar (Party of Functional Groups), to demonstrate their loyalty to the State.

In the July 1971 national elections Golkar won 62.8 per cent of the vote. Although a Golkar victory was not unexpected, the considerable margin by which the party won alarmed its opponents and observers. NU was the closest contender with 18.7 per cent and PNI captured just 6.9 per cent of the vote. The government now controlled 73 per cent of the parliament. Ken Ward, a Monash graduate student in Indonesia to observe the elections, explained the reasons for this outcome: '… the election was subjected to large-scale manipulation, and the results cannot be considered a reliable index of popular support for the government. But the election was of value in highlighting the ideological precepts of the New Order regime and in revealing how far removed is Indonesia's contemporary socio-political structure from attainment of the egalitarian ideas of Indonesian's revolution.'[20]

The New Order regime, however, saw the resounding victory as validation for tightening control and set about destroying the old political parties. This control of the political process, dashing all hope of a revival of constitutional democracy in Indonesia, became total in January 1973, when the government ruled that the number of political parties be reduced to three. All Islamic parties were conflated into one, the United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan; PPP), and all non-Islamic parties would be represented by the Indonesian Democracy Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; PDI). Golkar was the third party eligible to contest the election in five years time. Moreover, the concept that became known as the 'floating mass', whereby the

people were disassociated from the political parties for the five years between elections, would become law in 1975. With this shift to total autocracy, for Herb 'Jakarta politics had ceased to be interesting – with the army's control overwhelmingly entrenched, non-governmental political activity suppressed or absorbed and intra-governmental factionalism apparently reduced to minor significance'.[21]

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In his book *What Really Matters* medical and cultural anthropologist Arthur Kleinman recalls how he was asked by an aid worker friend for his professional opinion on whether she was clinically depressed. She had long worked in the most desperate situations in refugee camps and war-torn parts of Africa and found herself now despairing at the ineffectiveness of her relief programs and her own exhaustion. Kleinman's response to his friend was,

> 'If you really want to know, I think you are demoralized', I told her. 'Not in the sense of depression but in that of a moral crisis. You feel the burden of responsibility to your programs and yet you don't see clearly how you can carry out that responsibility. You don't see a way forward for yourself and your programs, yet your work matters more than anything else to you.'[22]

This assessment might have described Herb's state of mind by 1974. Although his comments make it appear as though Herb simply no longer found Indonesia interesting, his despair with the study of Indonesian politics was a consequence also of his continuing uncertainty about his career and life direction. After a period

of sustained moral confusion and physical exhaustion, Herb was deeply in need of renewal.

Finding Bangladesh

By the time Indonesia's 1971 election had run its course and its predictable outcome had become a depressing reality, Herb's search for a project to succeed his interest in Indonesia was well underway. In September 1971 Herb chose to use his invitation to give a lecture in the Flinders University Asian Studies annual series to explore the conflict and massive refugee crisis in Bangladesh.

While several factors – practical and emotional – were pushing him away from Indonesia as a focus for his work, several factors were combining to pull him towards the Bangladesh crisis. As Herb explained it, the situation in Bangladesh struck him in its initial weeks as uncannily like the crisis in Indonesia in 1965–66, involving a short-lived left-wing coup followed by an opportunistic crackdown on communist elements. Herb also recognised the strategic reasons for undertaking research of this kind. Pakistan and Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan) had not been the subject of research by Australian political scientists. Yet the growing humanitarian crisis was in urgent need of international attention and understanding. His response, therefore, although scholarly, was also very much that of the activist.

From the outset, the plight of the internally displaced non-Bengali Muslim minority was Herb's particular focus. These people were known as Biharis because most of them originated from the Indian state of Bihar and had moved to East Pakistan after Partition in 1947. Following Pakistan President Yahya Kahn's crackdown on the Bengali independence movement in East Pakistan on 25 March 1971, when tens of thousands of

Bengalis were killed, the Biharis, who largely supported Kahn, became the focus of retaliatory attack. In the following weeks several thousand were killed and millions forced to flee. By May up to 3.5 million refugees were displaced, fleeing mostly from East Bengal into India at a rate of 40 000 to 60 000 a day. (In September Herb estimated the number of refugees to have increased to eight million.)

Herb's interest in Bangladesh was further aroused by the indication that a guerrilla movement that he thought 'had real potential' was gathering strength.[23] The strength of support for the Awami League, then with tacit international backing, among Bengalis encouraged him to think that this was a new independent post-revolutionary state in the making. In his lecture at Flinders University, Herb considered the question and possibility of Bangladesh as forming a viable state, using it to tease out the very concept of 'viability' and what constitutes a 'failing' state. He tackled questions of whether the break-up of a state should be condoned, about whether a secessionist movement should be permitted to succeed in one instance, thereby infusing other such movements in the developing world with hope and, consequently, fuel continuing instability.

Although this was already a field of deep interest in his undergraduate teaching, Herb's consideration of these questions in the context of East Pakistan's struggle for independence marked an important shift in his written scholarship towards a more international and Third World perspective, away from his focus on Indonesian politics. His discussions of the viability of small and post-revolutionary states had their basis in his deep understanding of Indonesia through its revolutionary and early independence years and his critical interpretations of international relations and development theory in his discipline. The themes raised in

this early analysis of secessionist struggles, the identification of 'failing' states, and the standards for 'success' in the international system would feature in his scholarship for the next two decades.

In conjunction with his scholarly investigation of the Bangladesh crisis, Herb initiated the formation of an action and awareness-raising group, the Committee to Support Bangladesh, together with Jesuit priest and then Monash student Mark Raper and others from Herb's close circle, including Charles Coppel.[24] With Herb as its convener, the committee supported the establishment of an independent Bangladeshi state or an arrangement whereby autonomy would be provided within the state of Pakistan. The committee initiated petitions, distributed educational materials about the crisis and collected donations for the relief effort, for use and distribution by AUSTCARE, Community Aid Abroad and other agencies. The committee's main functions were to be a public education forum and to lobby the Australian parliament to support refugee aid efforts and a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

In December 1971, when the Pakistani army was defeated and East Pakistan became the independent state of Bangladesh, what had been for Herb a preliminary investigation and largely an activist concern began to take on a more serious shape as a research agenda. For some time Herb had been unsure of how to spend his approaching sabbatical year and had been vacillating between visiting Illich's Centro Intercultural de Documentación in Mexico, spending more time in Indonesia, or simply staying at home and reading more theory. Bangladesh's achieving statehood and the continuing urgent crisis there added another demanding option and forced his decision; he began making plans to travel to Bangladesh when his term as Head of Department ended.

Suharto's visit

As Herb commenced his sabbatical in February 1972, Suharto became the first Indonesian head of state to visit Australia. The Australian Government was eager to stress to Indonesia the importance of the relationship between the two countries. Writing for *The Age* on the eve of Suharto's arrival, Bruce Grant commented, 'The Indonesian President will find in Australia that we view Indonesia more importantly than Indonesia views us. This is natural in the sense that it arises from inescapable geopolitical realities.'

Despite the government's ambitions for the visit, the Australian public's view of the President of Indonesia was somewhat different and his welcome was shaping up to be far from warm. There was a decided unease about the visit among trade unions and among some lawyers, journalists and academics, particularly about the role of the military in Indonesian government and about political prisoners. The Indonesian delegation had no illusions about the coolness of the reception they would receive from non-government groups. Although Suharto only visited Canberra, his key adviser and head of Indonesia's intelligence organisation OPSUS (Special Operations Service), Lieutenant General Ali Murtopo,[25] saw the visit as an opportunity to confront some of their Australian critics face to face.[26]

For several years preceding the President's visit, Herb, Jamie Mackie, John Legge, his Monash students and many other scholars, activists and journalists with an interest in Indonesia had openly and actively condemned the increasingly oppressive nature of the New Order regime. On the eve of this presidential visit, Herb had gone a step further in his protest by publishing an 'Open Letter to Suharto' in the opinion pages of *The Age* with the title 'Mr Suharto, your critics are your friends'. The letter had a

politeness of approach in opening, but did not disguise his bold and sharp condemnation of the Suharto regime, which focused on the plight of political prisoners and the role of the army in government.

By this time, Monash University was well known in New Order circles and deemed synonymous with open opposition to the regime. Murtopo was keen to include a visit to Monash on the delegation's agenda. As news of the visit became public, a student protest and petition was organised to coincide with the meeting. Realising that they might be met by a large crowd of student protesters, the Indonesians quickly changed their plans and asked to meet in an office building in the city. What either side hoped to achieve is not clear. Many of the academics present had just days earlier, on 9 March, signed a letter to the editor of *The Age* condemning the Indonesian Government's continued detention without trial of more than 28 000 political prisoners. Although the meeting was, by all accounts, courteous and polite, predictably, neither side shifted its position on any of the issues discussed. Herb's use of rapid-fire Indonesian, in spite of the Indonesian delegation's use of English, did, however, manage to catch the visitors somewhat off their guard.

Although he was at the front and centre of the debates about this visit and undoubtedly emboldened by his decision to publish his 'Open Letter to Suharto', it could be argued that Herb's attentions were already focused elsewhere. In the weeks following the visit, he was preoccupied with preparations for his trip to Bangladesh. His expectations of the trip were high, as he wrote to Rex Mortimer on 5 March: 'Tomorrow night I go off to Calcutta, and after a few days there to Dacca. A mixed lot of feelings in anticipation, but I heard things from a very well-informed American journalist just back from there which make me think that I might

just be carried away by the hope and zest of the place. We'll see!'[27]

Nevertheless, Indonesia was still in his travel plans. En route to Dacca, Herb stopped over in Singapore where he submitted a visa application to the Indonesian Embassy. He had tentatively arranged to visit Indonesia on his way home in May, largely to see Ben Anderson. However, the processing of his application at the embassy was delayed repeatedly and without explanation. After waiting for some days, Herb decided not to protest or to ask questions but simply to withdraw his application, perhaps with the intention of trying again at another embassy. Herb knew that earlier in March, Ben's research visa had been suspended, and he had decided to cease his research activities but to stay on in Indonesia; they arranged to meet in mid-May. Herb went on to Dacca, fully expecting to make his planned rendezvous with Ben two months later.

Dacca

Herb spent several weeks in Bangladesh meeting pro-independence political actors, but the experience, which he inevitably compared to Indonesia, was initially uncomfortable and less than satisfying. He struggled with the language and was unable to make the connections with informants that his research method demanded:

> Dacca … struck me as culturally alien to a degree I had not expected … it was partly that almost every public sign was in Bengali script … it was partly that I was unprepared for this being so thoroughly Muslim a society: hardly any women to be seen on the streets … I had also read wrong meanings into the Bangladesh movement's professions of secularism.[28]

Encountering and learning a nation as complex and chaotic as fledgling Bangladesh was more difficult than he had anticipated, as he told Ken Ward: 'I'd expected to come to terms with the society more quickly, or to enjoy it more spontaneously.'[29] Added to this was the fact that, when he first arrived, Herb was largely on his own. There is little indication that he had a great list of contacts to call on in Dacca. Undoubtedly, his first visits were to academics in the University of Dhaka, and he found his way to several non-government groups working specifically on the refugee problem. His empathy with the Bihari minority, tens of thousands of whom were then living in camps in Bangladesh fearful of returning to their homes, led him very early in his stay to visit several of the camps. In an article written for the *Far Eastern Economic Review* entitled 'Bihari sorrow', Herb described the plight of the refugees who were 'huddled in camps and ghettos in many parts of the country' with inadequate food and sanitation.

But he discovered that his initial reason for his connection to the struggle of the people determined far away – his attraction to the romantic notion of a new independent state perhaps forged in the ideals of an Illichian utopia – only took him so far: 'While my heart bleeds for the Biharis … I'm also not as strongly disenchanted with the Awami League as many … I don't think I'll decide to learn Bengali properly, or to come back here again soon. But I'm sure it will have been very good for my capacities as a teacher of comparative politics having been here …'[30]

By the end of his seven-week stay he felt more comfortable, but his frustrations continued as he struggled to determine his stance on the political situation: 'Bangladesh is exciting, but also confusing and depressing. Over the last week or so confusion has been uppermost in my responses, largely because I find it hard to

delimit my concerns here. Or perhaps I'm confused because it's a confusing situation. Or perhaps because I am me!'[31]

Inevitably, Herb's experience and interpretation of the situation in Bangladesh were constantly set against and compared with his understanding of Indonesia. As he wrote in late March, 'I don't know whether I want to see things go left. Partly because my liberal conscience is engaged by the cause of the poor Biharis, for whom the left will make life even harder than everyone else will.' Towards the end of his trip, although he remained unconvinced by the Awami League's agenda, he acknowledged that 'My ambivalences are thus less acute than in the case of Indonesia, because the texture of the regime here is so much more open.'[32]

Shortly before he was due to depart Bangladesh for Indonesia Herb received a letter posted from Singapore airport from Ben with news of his expulsion from Indonesia and his decision to return immediately to America.[33] The Cornell group of scholars and their circle had feared such an eventuality since they had become aware that the Preliminary Report had been leaked to Indonesian authorities soon after its circulation to a limited number of confidantes early in 1966. The Indonesian Embassy in Singapore had not conclusively refused to allow Herb to enter Indonesia; if he had pushed hard to get a visa and had called on his contacts in senior positions in government, he might eventually have been granted one. Until Ben's expulsion from the country, however, their correspondence about a rendezvous in Indonesia in May had indicated a real hope on Herb's part that he would get into the country. As he wrote to Kahin in April, 'Exposure to Indonesia and laughing about things with Ben might give me a clearer feeling of having something to say [about its current politics] …'[34] With Ben's expulsion, the main attraction of the trip was no longer there. Further intelligence also indicated that

Herb and Dan Lev were also *personae non gratae* to the Indonesian authorities. Paradoxically, this information was in many ways a relief.

Herb had earlier admitted that his sense of obligation and responsibility to his students caused him to retreat to what he called 'visa cowardice' as he sought to protect not only his access but also, more importantly, their access to Indonesia. Moreover, he continued to have difficulties in working out how to embark upon a writing project with the working title 'Interpretations of the New Order'. He admitted he was conflicted because 'it's a book that needs to be written … [whereas] the other half of me says what is the point of writing a book when you don't really have anything to say, when all you'll be saying is revealing your own ambivalence and confusion'.[35] The indications that he was probably *persona non grata* in Indonesia meant that he no longer needed to make excuses for not having anything to say.

The decision about whether he should return to Indonesia, about whether he should pursue his visa application, was in the end taken out of his hands. There is, however, a sense that Herb was actively undermining his own chances of gaining entry to Indonesia and was taking an altogether different path from the one he needed to take to write a scholarly analysis of the first years of the New Order government as he had planned. His 'Open Letter' was deliberately constructed and intended to embarrass Suharto on his visit to Australia, and Herb was very aware of the risks involved in publishing it. Before doing so, he had even sought the advice of Widjojo Nitisastro, then Indonesia's Minister of Planning and National Development and Chairman of BAPPENAS, the national development planning organisation, whom he knew from his days at Cornell when Widjojo was at the University of California, Berkeley, in the late 1950s.

In their frank discussion in February 1972, Herb's notes of the conversation record that Widjojo conceded Suharto's failings in relation to the powerful role of the military and his clampdown on civil rights, but rebutted the idea that the President was without good intent and intellect: 'You know Pak Harto is not unresponsive. And he is not uninformed. We are often amazed by how carefully he reads the papers.' Widjojo advised Herb to send the letter to Suharto privately and sounded a warning about publishing it: 'Your letter is good. I like the way you call attention to the achievements of the government in the early years. So many people have forgotten about them now. But if you use it in this way there is a great danger that it'll be counterproductive.'[36] Herb went ahead and published his 'Open Letter' in *The Age* two days after this conversation with Widjojo, no doubt fully aware that he might be banned from entering Indonesia as a consequence of doing so.

In 1972 Herb shed another onerous responsibility by resigning from the board of the Overseas Services Bureau (OSB), successor to the Graduate Employment Scheme. OSB was now sending volunteers to many countries around the world and had taken on advisers and board members from business and government to facilitate its growth into a professional body, rendering it a much more political and unwieldy organisation. Herb found himself in an all-too-familiar and uncomfortable predicament. Nevertheless, his commitment remained steadfast, and he continued to be a keen adviser and mentor for many who were involved in OSB. This decision further lifted the burden of responsibility Herb felt about protecting access to Indonesia for volunteers, including his students. Paradoxically, with the certainty of his being banned from Indonesia, Herb was free to take a more prominent role in criticising the increasingly authoritarian regime. At the same time

he was afraid that he was losing his 'hold on my one craft, Indonesia, and may not be able to master any other in a way which gives me real satisfaction'.[37]

Although the Bangladesh experiment had not been as successful as he had hoped, he did not abandon his interest altogether. His plans for the second half of 1972 involved a great deal of travel, culminating in two months at Cornell where he intended to write. His itinerary included a further two weeks in Bangladesh in September, but this visit only confirmed that he was not going to develop a long-term and deep scholarly attachment to the new nation. A year that had begun with so much hope was now looking less hopeful. As the failure of the Bangladesh experiment and an indeterminate period of absence from Indonesia hit home, Herb again looked for a new direction.

Encountering Illich

Herb's premature return to Melbourne in May brought him face to face with Ivan Illich, the source of much of his inspiration to find a new way of thinking about his recent work. Illich was a guest at the Australian Union of Students (AUS) Education conference in Melbourne. He addressed a packed Wilson Hall at Melbourne University on a Saturday night in late May, impressing the large audience of students and academics with a short address featuring the ideas in his recent and controversial book about alternative approaches to education, *Deschooling Society*, after which he answered questions for two hours.

In Melbourne several community schools had opened in 1972, including the Collingwood and Swinburne Community Schools. Herb's son David was increasingly keen to follow his Melbourne High School teacher, Roy Irvine, whose drive to establish a similar school had been floated to parents the previous year. As

the support for such a school grew and planning progressed, Illich's influence through the ideas in *Deschooling* played a significant part. As Herb wrote of the plans for a community school to George Kahin in early 1972, 'All this means that Illich is doubly relevant to us.'[38]

Illich's message to his Melbourne audience in late May echoed his book's proposition that the mood of the times 'is propitious for a major change of direction in search of a hopeful future'.[39] As the correspondent for *Lot's Wife* reported, 'One of the earliest comments in his address was an observation that the present moment is probably one of the few times in the history of thought when it is possible to ask new questions'.[40] Herb did not meet Illich on this visit, but the accounts of those who did found his personality and intellect as impressive up close as when he addressed a large audience. As *Lot's Wife* described it, Illich's qualities of incredible warmth and dynamism of personality came across to all present at Wilson Hall that evening. Herb's encounter with Illich, whether as witness to his performance or in more intimate circumstances, was profoundly influential; later writing that Illich 'swept me off my professional feet'.[41] As he reflected on his own position as an academic who had progressed rapidly through the hierarchy of the university, Illich's messages and sentiments in *Deschooling* resonated with Herb's current mood and preoccupations.

Herb attributed his new awareness of possible ways of thinking about the Third World and its relations with the West to his first 'encounter' with Illich through reading the essay 'Outwitting the "Developed" Countries' in late 1969. Having struggled to find a theoretical pathway leading beyond the critique of modernisation theory within his discipline of political science, Herb found Illich's approach a salve. What Herb found most appealing was that 'Illich was addressing himself to people who were

thinking about the future of the Third World, and particularly people of the Third World itself'. It was, he added 'startling for its stark claims that indeed the West's tools of "modernisation" and "progress" were doing great harm to these peoples and lands', describing Illich as 'a prophet of poor countries to the rich'.[42]

A year before Illich visited Melbourne, Rex Mortimer had advised his friend as he struggled to find his direction and his approach to the problems of Indonesia, 'What I would most like you to do is go and spend some time with Illich, just to see what he is doing … I think you have been hung up for some time by the political theory crisis, so I guess some reflective period would be helpful.'[43]

At the time he received Rex's advice, Herb's decision-making was guided by his obligation to his family to whom he owed time and attention after several hectic years, and his professional commitment to his study of Indonesia and his more recent interest in Bangladesh. The fateful encounter with his guru Illich on his return to Melbourne in May 1972 and the obvious failure of the Bangladesh experiment gathered strength as signs that he should go to Illich's CIDOC.

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In September and October 1972 Herb headed overseas again for the planned extra two weeks in Bangladesh. The main purpose and highlight of his trip were to attend a conference at the Asian Leadership Development Centre of the World Student Christian Federation in Tosanzo, Japan. His paper, titled 'Growth and development in Asia: Some criticisms of conventional approaches', began with a deeply self-reflective narrative of his engagement with Asia and education as a Western scholar. As he

later described it, this paper told the story of his 'dramatic break with modernization'. He spoke of how he had become a professional political scientist through his graduate studies at Cornell, admitting that he had asked few questions about economic development and had simply accepted 'conventional notions of it which emphasised inputs of capital and Western-style skills'. As the Indonesian political and social crises developed in the early 1960s, he told his audience, he was forced to confront the inadequacy of his position:

> After all a political scientist can't ever be neutral or merely descriptive; he is always taking positions, knowingly or not. He is of course obliged to take realities seriously, even realities which don't fit into his classificatory and analytical schemes. But the very terms and concepts in which he describes a situation imply more general conceptions which favour some groups and outlooks and disparage others.[44]

The paper also reveals Herb's break with his initial 'moderately' positive impression of the Suharto government and his rejection of the use of conventional measures of development by the regime and by many in the West to herald its achievements: 'In the name of development, politics has been largely suppressed, particularly since the heavily over-managed elections of 1971.' He was critical of what he called the IMF and World Bank style approach to economic development in Indonesia, highlighting the growing distortions of income distribution, which allowed the urban elite in politics and the military to become richer while the rural poor languished. He made connections between the Indonesian army's business interests and deals with Western and Japanese corporations and drew comparisons with the Dutch colonial period of

economic exploitation of Indonesia's resources. He returned to his own journey to explain how his thinking on these issues had come to change. He revealed the significant influence of the essay 'Outwitting the "Developed" Countries', 'which did more to turn my thinking on this whole subject upside down than all the learned articles I had been reading for years'. He also spoke of his recent re-evaluation of the political and economic achievements of China. Although very aware of the reality that the Communist Party, rather than the Chinese peasants, was running that country, he saw the potential for other poor countries to learn from its 'peasant-centredness', from 'the way in which Chinese villagers have become active participants in the development process'. His conclusions about the assumptions and goals underlying Western models of development and modernisation were, Herb admitted, neither unique nor occurring in a vacuum, but were the subject of a growing body of literature about development, but they were a decisive rendering of his position at the time.

End of the illusion?

Decades later, Herb described the change that took place in his world view at this time, shifting from pessimism to being

> more optimistic, more interested in Utopian projects, more interested in seeing the Third World as a source of hope rather than looking at it and being overwhelmed by the horrors of Nazism and Stalinism, I suppose, seeing Nazism and Stalinism as part of a European story that need not necessarily destroy the hope that I saw in the newly independent countries. I felt that these people were – yeah, they seemed to think their countries had a future and they seemed to be committed to

> something and saw that as not just building tiny oases in a sea of evil, a desert of evil, but something much more hopeful than that.[45]

In the preceding years the influence of his graduate students, especially Rex Mortimer, on Herb's thinking had been significant, as he had been on theirs. Correspondence between Herb and Rex in May 1970 tracked the extent to which their world views were simultaneously changing, mostly in complementary ways. Rex replied to Herb's comments on a draft of his thesis, beginning with a reference to his departure from the Australian Communist Party in 1969 following the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968.

> … with the breakdown of my world view, I have had to make do for the time being with a concoction of various, often contradictory, concepts only half assimilated, combined with residues of my vulgar Marxist past … As yet, I feel a long way from having a confident grip on anything but at the same time am developing a more critical attitude towards various orthodoxies which for a time offered some illusory security … To return to your concepts; I know generally in which direction you have changed, and I am inclined the same way, but I have far too little foundation to take it up and bowl it along. So I am playing safe.[46]

In the early 1970s NGOs and aid organisations in Australia and other Western countries took a radical turn in their approach to poverty in the Third World. In 1972 the Australian Council of Churches (ACC), buoyed by liberation theology advocating justice in international trading arrangements and the sharing of

responsibility for Third World poverty, initiated the Action for World Development (AWD) campaign, on which Mark Raper, Herb's fellow Committee to Support Bangladesh organiser, was employed. Through their long association with the ACC, Herb and Betty knew many of those active in the AWD campaign.

At Monash and in the Centre for South East Asian Studies (CSEAS), issues concerning the analysis of development and progress were projected inevitably, in a somewhat combustible way, on to analysis of Indonesia's current situation. Academics and students split into two groups: those who were attracted to Illichian ideas and the AWD approach and were therefore critical of Indonesia's so-called economic miracle; and those who measured that growth as a positive for Indonesia overall. Heated debate led to the decision to hold a series of seminars, under the auspices of the Monash Association of Students and parallel to the regular CSEAS seminar series, to examine Indonesia's political economy.

Rex Mortimer, then a lecturer in Department of Government at Sydney University, was the seminar's coordinator and a contributor, together with Monash graduate students Peter Britton, Ward, Smith and Currey. 'Indonesia', Rex wrote in his introduction to *Showcase State*, the book that emerged from the seminars, merits 'special attention … as an exemplar of the misconceptions about development in the Third World'. He and his contributors argued that orthodox economic theory informing policy in Indonesia and other parts of the poor world was a deeply flawed approach that 'lies in their assumption that processes which are assumed to have worked in the affluent countries in the past will do the same job in the poor countries today'. With echoes of Illich, he went on, 'Those for whom the benefits of development are ostensibly destined – the great masses of people who are

peasants, workers, tradesmen and petty traders – not only have no say in the way in which the process is directed, but all too often are the victims rather than the beneficiaries of measures taken in their name.'[47] *Showcase State*, as its editor predicted, sent shockwaves through Indonesian studies in Australia when it was published the following year and marked an important point in their evolution.

Herb was involved in planning the seminars' program and, as supervisor to several of the graduate students involved, his support for their positions was well known, but he did not contribute a paper to the series nor a chapter for the book. He chose instead the forum in Japan in October, with an international audience of Christian students, to reveal his own shift in thinking on Indonesia, on development and his approach to the Third World. Although heavily influenced at the time by his radical students and colleagues, such as Rex Mortimer and Max Teichmann, and by the New Left intellectuals in Australia and the West generally in the late 1960s and early 1970s, Herb was well aware of the expectations of him as a senior academic and Indonesia 'expert' in Melbourne. Undoubtedly years in the making, this paper[48] signalled that he was preparing to take a stance of sorts, to challenge his fellow social scientists and Indonesianists in Australia and elsewhere and his friends working within the Indonesian government to implement the development program for the so-called economic miracle.

The paper makes abundantly clear how deeply engrossed Herb was in Illich's work and how much he wanted to learn more about applying Illichian ideas to his understanding and teaching of Indonesia and the Third World. Nonetheless, after his return from Japan, Herb was still wrestling with whether he should go

to CIDOC and learn directly from his new guru. In November he noted in his diary, 'What does it all boil down to? … my degree of confidence in my capacity to cope or conversely my modesty and willingness to acknowledge that I can't do more than a fairly small number of things if I'm going to do them properly.'[49]

He had very high expectations and hoped that Illich could provide him with the new, creative insight he was lacking and craving. Of course, the risk was that he would fail to find such reward and that his time and energies would again be wasted. Even when he had already committed to this shift in direction, Herb was still full of doubt, not only about the trip to Mexico but also about his path more generally, almost as though he was mourning the passing of one period of his professional life as he embarked upon another. This uncertainty is expressed clearly in diary notes at the time:

> Crisis?
>
> Is it a deep one or a temporary and not very serious one?
>
> 1. The end of the Indonesian phase? Loss of intense commitment of earlier years, loss of access maybe
>
> 2. Still no firm grip on any successor commitment
>
> Bangladesh was a successor interest but briefly.
>
> The 3rd World course and radicalism generally is the real candidate for a successor commitment – and when I'm feeling confident that seems likely to be a real answer.[50]

At a more esoteric level, Herb expressed his dilemma in terms that had become familiar over more than a decade: 'Why am I so knotted up and hamstrung? Presumably because there are some important conflicts within me about the whole thing. And perhaps these conflicts are related to the mind versus heart, theorizing

versus action, professional work versus deconditioning, critical versus liberating.'[51]

At this time Herb was designing a new first-year course entitled 'Third World', which was to be taught the following year. It was to be compulsory for anyone majoring in politics and was to be taught jointly with Hugh Emy and Max Teichmann. The course examined 'the relationships between West and non-West, theories of modernisation, technological diffusion of nationalism and imperialism'. He was also preparing to teach his Indonesian politics course under a new rubric, 'Indonesian Political Economy', and with a focus on development in the Suharto period since 1966. Herb hoped that a few months studying at CIDOC would provide fresh and useful insight for his contribution to the new course. Eventually, his desire for new creative input overruled his doubts and any sense of guilt that the trip was a personal indulgence. The Labor Party's long-awaited victory in the federal election just a week or so before his departure further bolstered his sense that the times were responsive to change. The emotional build-up to this trip, with its great personal and professional turmoil and national excitement, meant that his expectations of Illich and CIDOC were perilously high.

Cuernavaca

> There really is nothing more exciting than coming to terms with a society one has previously not known.
>
> Herb Feith, Cuernavaca, 5 February 1973[52]

In many ways, as Herb himself was aware, the lengthy and tortured build-up of expectations and trepidations about his trip to CIDOC was so intense, with so much invested in it emotionally

and intellectually, that it was never likely to satisfy in all respects. As he admitted, 'This has been an emotionally tangled territory for me, I now realize.' His expectations were very much linked to Illich the person:

> For whatever reasons I built Illich up to messianic proportions in my mind. Not only his writing but particularly the impression he made on me on the one occasion I heard him lecture … had led my mind to attribute extraordinary qualities of personality and intellect to him. And so what I have seen in the last few weeks had been quite deeply disappointing …[53]

His use of the term 'messianic' is telling, acknowledging, albeit unconsciously perhaps, that Illich held promise for him as a saviour of sorts in his ongoing search for direction in his professional work and as a provider of spiritual sustenance as well. Up close, Herb encountered a man with flaws, inconsistencies and ego. He remarked on Illich's 'aristocratic and elitist' outlook, which emboldened him 'to write about the world's problems at a level of generality for which he is not equipped', making an initial response to Illich that was not unusual. Others who flocked to CIDOC to sit at their guru's feet also found him initially arrogant and disconnected from the everyday. As Eugene Burkart, an American law student who was at CIDOC a few months after Herb, put it: 'Illich was not what we expected.' Like Herb, this young American self-confessed radical had arrived at Cuernavaca, with a lot on his mind, only to have his good intentions questioned and challenged by Illich: 'He would not flatter our sense of moral superiority or romanticise those we considered disadvantaged in the US … How radical were we? he seemed to ask.'[54]

About CIDOC the institution, Herb was also critical – 'there is a bit too much of the country club atmosphere about it' – and he found its seminars to be of variable quality. Nonetheless, despite these shortcomings, Herb found his fellow participants and the conversations he had in the library and cafeteria to be all-redeeming. They were, he explained, 'no mere assemblage of Illich admirers … it may be Illich's great claim to recognition that he has succeeded in making CIDOC something bigger than himself.' He met biologists from Chile, American composers, Cuban sociologists, 'ex-Peace Corp kids looking for a way of doing things better in Latin America', 'twenty-something New York socialites' and 'assorted Frenchmen on their way to Chile'. In Mexico he found another very exciting country with which he immediately drew comparisons to Indonesia in terms of conflicts related to modernisation versus tradition and the legacy of the revolution on the modern nation state.

Ivan Illich and Herb Feith had in common their Viennese and exilic origins. Illich, born four years before Herb in 1926, was forced to flee from Vienna with his family in 1941, although a Catholic, because his mother was Jewish. Illich studied theology in Rome and completed a PhD at the University of Salzburg. He began his work as a priest in 1952 among Puerto Rican and Irish communities in Washington Heights, New York, where he became fluent in Spanish, one of ten languages he would work in during his life.

Herb was attracted to Illich's 'Third World first' view of the international system and to his belief that the people of the 'poor' countries have something to teach those in the 'rich' ones. They shared an interest in the role of the 'First World' volunteer in poor countries and, surprisingly perhaps, Illich's radical opposition to schemes like the United States' Peace Corps and other

'missionary' activities had similarities in the Volunteer Graduate Scheme's ethos and in Herb's constant struggle about his role and place as a Westerner when he was in Indonesia. As Illich argued, these well-intentioned Americans and other Westerners were agents of a development program, preaching doctrine and bringing the ritual, lifestyle and histories of their own countries with them,[55] a point of view that Herb would have largely shared.[56]

On issues related to the method and application of Illich's ideology, however, Herb found much to disagree with; he was particularly concerned that Illich did not take seriously the implications of a political economy analysis of the world systems and structures underlying relationships between the First and Third Worlds. Indeed, many others among Illich's critics point to his lack of rigour and use of data in his work. His writings, as one commentator put it, 'were founded essentially on intuition … His criticism evolves in a theoretical vacuum.'[57] Years later, when they had become close, Herb came to see their relationship less as between flawed guru and disappointed pupil and more as that of brothers and he applied a less doctrinal analysis to Illich's work, finding a way to make use of it in his own work and assessing its importance, as others have, for its suggestive and maverick quality.[58]

After his seven weeks in Cuernavaca, Herb visited Cornell for a week to catch up with his old MIP friends and, no doubt, to process the CIDOC experience. As always, Kahin was encouraging and supportive of Herb's intellectual explorations and his preoccupation with finding an alternative way of understanding the world and Indonesia's place in it. George and Herb discussed the idea that he might write a book analysing approaches to Indonesia in the social sciences since 1965 – an expanded version, perhaps, of what he had begun with 'The study of Indonesian politics: A

survey and an apologia', which might include 'critical discussion of the work of scholars in four or five social science disciplines'.[59] Herb left Ithaca pledging to send a proposal to Cornell University Press in the near future, and did so in September.

Herb returned to Australia, where the political landscape was entirely altered and filled with hope. The election victory of the Labor Party under its leader, Gough Whitlam, in December 1972 was the beginning of a period of rapid change and immense excitement across the country. Herb resumed his teaching duties, teaching the revised first-year compulsory course 'Third World'. For the last time he taught his 'Politics of Modernisation' course to fourth-year students; his long-running and popular 'Indonesian Politics' course was replaced by 'Indonesian Political Economy'. Relieved of his administrative burdens, he had time to further ponder his reactions to the CIDOC experience and assess its usefulness. He spoke about CIDOC, Ivan Illich and his work to several forums in early 1973. His notes for these presentations have none of the sense of extreme disappointment and criticism he sent in his February letters from Mexico; rather he credited Illich as 'One of the great figures of contemporary social thought' and a 'Third World spokesperson'.[60]

Meanwhile, the impact of the recently published *Showcase State* was being felt in the field of Indonesian studies and more broadly in the aid community. Agencies with project interests in Indonesia, including Community Aid Abroad (CAA) and AWD, heralded the book's key concepts.[61] Not unexpectedly, the response to *Showcase State* of some Australian Indonesianists, particularly ANU economists, including Heinz Arndt, was quite different. Mortimer and others involved in the publication of the book were already well aware that many of their colleagues strongly disagreed with their approach. In his 'Introduction', Mortimer provocatively called

on them and others with similarly ambivalent attitudes to open their minds as individuals to alternative and, as he put it, morally guided views:

> To the extent that the academic forsakes the intellectual function to subject all social and political action to rigorous and fearless analysis according to his judgment and the values he upholds – out of consideration for extraneous loyalties, or a desire to 'see the best in things' – he denies his own role and ends up as an apologist and disseminator of harmful illusions.[62]

While the principal issue taken up by their opponents was the critical analysis the book's authors applied to Indonesia's development program and 'growth', Rex's decision to include his own chapter entitled 'From Ball to Arndt' drew some of the most emotive responses to the book. Herb had expressed his reservations to Rex about the chapter when the book was being planned and described it in his review as 'disturbing'.[63] Rex evokes Macmahon Ball and Heinz Arndt as representing two poles of 'contemporary liberal ideology' that influenced the field of Asian and Indonesian studies in the Australian academy in the preceding decades. However, the analysis is decidedly unbalanced, with at least half of the chapter taken up with discussion and criticism of Arndt's position as the champion of developmentalism: 'he betrays a marked insensitivity towards the adverse social consequences of its implementation of the Western conceived development effort'.[64]

Rex's criticisms of Arndt's position on Indonesia go beyond economics, to accuse him of near 'denial' or, at the very least, neglect in not mentioning the role of the Suharto regime in the massacres that preceded its ascension to power. At Herb's

suggestion, Rex had sent the chapter to Ball and Arndt ahead of publication for their comment and had entered into an extraordinary correspondence with them in which they expressed their objections to his reading of their professional influences. Their responses were no surprise.[65]

In his review of *Showcase*, Herb commented that 'depressing as Mortimer's perspectives are, they are also exciting. Like all successful shakers of paradigmatic kaleidoscopes, he opens vast vistas of important intellectual work'.[66] His review accompanies a review by economist G.F. Papanek, which opens: 'This is a sad and disappointing little book.'[67] Herb's review begins: 'This is a powerful and important book'. The split within the field, particularly between Monash and ANU scholars of Indonesia, could not have been illustrated more starkly. As Herb put it, 'It has already had quite a lot of influence, both in recasting the terms of argument about Indonesia and in reshaping the agenda for studying it.'[68]

Practising what you preach

> On 3 January, 1973, XXXX advised that a reliable source had recently commented that FEITH had of late shifted towards the left in a most noticeable manner.
>
> ASIO file entry for Herbert Feith, 5 January 1973[69]

After a year of planning and searching for a location, Brinsley Road Community School was established in February 1973 at a site rented from the Salvation Army in East Camberwell. On the three-acre site was a run-down old mansion, a more modern house and several outhouses, all set within an expansive garden. As it was not equipped to operate as an autonomous school, the

Victorian Ministry of Education stipulated that it be an annexe of nearby Camberwell High School. Before the buildings could be approved by the Ministry, a significant renovation was required. Parents contributed a great deal of time and energy preparing the buildings for occupation and contributed about $7000 with the agreement that the owners would repay it from rental income to be paid by the Ministry of Education.

The school opened with about a hundred students in years 7–12, including David Feith (Year 10) and Annie Feith (Year 9). For the most part, students were drawn to the school by the charismatic and popular Roy Irvine, previously at Melbourne High, who would serve as its Coordinator. Like other community schools at the time, Brinsley Road was run on the basis of achieving consensus among staff, students and parents. The Coordinator, for example, had no power to fire staff; teachers were more or less autonomous in making their decisions about the structure and form of their classes. Herb served on the school's inaugural Education Committee, and in the school's second year Betty taught Asian History on a voluntary basis while continuing her teaching at Strathcona Baptist Girls Grammar. Mostly from middle-class backgrounds, the students and their parents were attracted by the school's ethos of providing an informal learning environment with an emphasis on freedom and development of the individual. The school had strong Labor Party connections. Three grandchildren of Jim Cairns, leader of the Vietnam moratoriums and minister in the new Whitlam government, were enrolled; another Cabinet minister, Moss Cass, sent his two children; Clyde Holding, a Labor Party leader in Victoria and later minister in the Hawke government, had a child at the school.[70]

As well as the traditional subjects, students took courses in craft, pottery, Aboriginal studies and photography. Many of them,

including Annie and David, thrived in this environment, although very early on some parents began to express concerns about what they saw as their children's new lack of respect for authority and abuse of unchecked freedom. In these early days the future of the school was far from secure. When the lease on the Brinsley Road property was signed the understanding was that it was only for two years. When the search for an alternative site began in mid-1974 it was quickly realised that there was little hope of finding comparable accommodation in time. The search coincided with the departure of the school's leader, Roy Irvine, on what proved to be permanent sick leave. Without his inspirational leadership and organisational abilities the fledgling school embarked on a very rocky and ultimately destructive course.

After a long and arduous struggle with the Ministry, a new site for the school in Argo Street, Prahran, was approved late in 1974, where it was to continue as an annexe of Camberwell High. A new Coordinator was appointed to replace Roy Irvine. At the time of the move, it was decided that the school would no longer offer the Higher School Certificate (HSC) but would offer an 'alternative' year at Year 12 level. For the Feiths this was a significant decision. David, one of the first enthusiasts for the project, decided not to move with the school to Argo Street and attended Caulfield High School so that he could take his HSC. Annie followed her teachers and fellow students to Prahran for the 1975 school year where she was now in year 11.

The difficulties of the move and of adjusting to the loss of Roy Irvine became evident soon after the school year commenced. Teaching staff were unhappy with the new Coordinator, who wanted greater powers to discipline staff and regulate their work. For parents it made for a confusing and divisive situation. In April 1975 the Ministry for Education launched an inquiry

into the school after receiving what it claimed were numerous complaints from parents and neighbours. The School Council, which included parents and staff, were notified of the investigation and given a short time to make submissions.

Dismayed by the potential damage the increasingly intractable dispute would have on the school as a whole, Herb expressed his concerns and outlined a possible course of action. In his submission to the Ministry of Education, Herb was careful not to take the side of the teaching staff or of the Coordinator. Instead, he argued that the type of leader needed for the unique setting of the alternative or community school was hard to find and concluded that the current Coordinator was simply not the correct fit. Herb's comments about the necessary characteristics of a leader of a 'free' school with its ethos of egalitarianism and anti-authoritarianism were perhaps also partly self-prescriptive:

> It is a position which calls for someone with unusual talents and a particular kind of background. Authority must of course be exercised over staff members and students alike. But it can only be exercised effectively by someone who (in addition to understanding the limits posed by government policy, administrative precedent and community attitudes) embodies the ideals of the free school within his or her own person.[71]

Students make waves

In 1974 Herb had resumed the position of Chair of the Politics Department at Monash for another two-year term. This year also saw the arrival of American Barbara Harvey to teach Indonesian politics alongside Herb. Barbara was a Cornell graduate and Kahin mentee, fresh from submitting her doctorate on the Permesta

rebellion in South Sulawesi.[72] She co-taught several courses with Herb, as well as her own 'Tradition and Revolt in Asia'.

In the two years since his previous term as Head, the direction of Herb's teaching and research choices and his perception of his role as leader of the department had changed. In the past few years universities across Australia had experienced a greater push for more equitable and alternative forms of assessment, which echoed the ethos of the community schools, Paulo Freire[73] and Illichian ideology and their part in what Illich in *Deschooling Society* called the 'ritualisation of progress'. The student-led Assessment Action Campaign was attracting thousands of students to its meetings. Herb's experiences at Cuernavaca and with the community school at Brinsley Road meant he now had not only a theoretical and critical understanding but also practical experience of forms of alternative learning. He had been sympathetic to the demand for assessment change for some time and had become increasingly convinced of the need to liberalise the assessment process and uncouple it from the exam model. Consequently he supported the push for the student's right to choose from among various types of assessment. Herb's students and those in courses taught by his colleagues David Goldsworthy and Max Teichmann in Politics were to be offered a range of assessment options. The students hailed the shift to alternative assessment models, rating Herb's 'Third World' and 'Indonesian Political Economy' courses highly and recommending them to their peers.

As student pressure for change in Australian universities began to bear fruit, Indonesian students' discontent with the increasingly corrupt practices of their political, business and military elites and their conspicuous displays of extravagant wealth grew and found expression in protests on campuses there. Student-led

demonstrations in Thailand in October 1973, which led to the ousting of its government, encouraged their counterparts in Indonesia. Herb described this period of increased student action in opposition to the state from late 1973 to January 1974 as Indonesia's 'Prague Spring'. As he and Alan Smith, his co-author of a recent essay, had predicted before the campus demonstrations began, the legitimacy of the Suharto government was slowly being challenged because of its economic policies: '… large numbers of Indonesians had come to resent many of the government's politico-economic policies, which they saw as not merely raising per capita income but also increasing inequalities in both urban and rural areas, with military men and foreigners drawing benefits far greater than they were thought to deserve'.[74]

In contrast to his sense of despair following the 1971 elections, Herb's analysis of Indonesia in 1973 and early 1974 had upbeat hopefulness: 'The experience of far-reaching mobilization before 1965, however, and the influence of democratic and anti-imperialist ideologies make it unlikely that the political passivity the Suharto government has created will be long-lasting.'[75]

The weeks of student protest over the summer of 1973–74 were an encouraging sign but, ultimately, only a brief nod to Herb's predictions. Not for the last time, he had underestimated the intent and capacity of the Suharto regime to silence its critics at any cost. Moreover, he underestimated the extent to which the strength of Indonesia's economic situation would embolden the regime to do so brazenly.

These weeks of hope and expectation ended on 15 January 1974 when student-led demonstrations organised to coincide with a visit to Jakarta by the Prime Minister of Japan, Kakuei Tanaka, erupted into full-scale rioting. Youths and urban poor joined the student protest. Rioters looted and burned Japanese car

showrooms and Chinese-owned property and 'various symbols of the city's new cosmopolitanism and decadence, night clubs, steam baths and massage parlors'.[76] This sort of widespread discontent building up to violence had a recent precedent. In the preceding twelve months, there had been attacks on ethnic Chinese-owned property in West Java triggered by small racialised incidents but set within a wider context of growing anti-Chinese sentiment related to the increasingly ostentatious wealth of Chinese *cukong* close to government and military. The riots in Jakarta in January became known as Malari (Malapetaka Januari; January Disaster). As Harold Crouch, who was then completing his PhD at Monash, explained, although the demonstrations were triggered by Tanaka's visit, they were 'less expressions of anti-Japanese sentiment as such but rather a protest against growing foreign domination of the economy and the failure of "development" to raise the living standards of the poor'.[77] By 17 January the initially hesitant army had taken control.[78] Eleven people were dead and more than 500 arrested.[79] In the aftermath of the riot, the government closed more than ten publications and banned all demonstrations.

The finger of blame for the rioting was not pointed at the usual suspects, the communists. Commentators suggest this was because they were deemed to be sufficiently crushed by this time. Rather, in an effort to silence a vocal opposition, authorities apportioned blame to the so-called intellectual Left, including former Masjumi, PSI and PNI members. This included students, intellectuals, journalists and writers well known and connected to Herb and his fellow Indonesianists. Those arrested included prominent lawyers Yap Thiem Hien and Adnan Buyung Nasution, the former Ambassador to Australia, Major-General Suadi, economist Professor Sarbini and politician Rachman

Tolleng. Among the students arrested was student leader Marsillam Simanjuntak whom Herb had met and been greatly impressed by at the Young Asian Leaders Conference in Tugu in 1968. An arrest warrant was also issued for former diplomat, PSI leader and close friend of the Monash and Cornell Indonesianists, Soedjatmoko, who was out of the country at the time. To give force to their actions the authorities evoked a Sukarno era subversion law under which people could be detained for up to one year between a charge being laid and the commencement of court proceedings. In January 1975, a year after their arrest, a few of the fifty-nine detainees who had not been charged began to be released, including Yap Thiem Hien, bringing some hope.

The hope these releases brought, however, was short lived as further arrests were made in February, including that of journalist Mochtar Lubis, which again signalled the government's aim to crush even the potential for dissent. A lawyer for one of the students on trial, Juwono Sudarsono, wrote to Herb a short time later, 'new pessimism has pervaded most people in the academic and press circles'.[80] Lubis' newspaper *Indonesia Raya* was among those closed soon after the riots and, despite keeping a low profile since then, his arrest demonstrated the continuing repression of a regime intent on crushing opposition. Mochtar Lubis had a fairly significant international profile, causing the Australian journalist Hamish McDonald to conclude at the time, '[T]hat the Indonesian government can take the risk of an outcry about the Lubis jailing indicates its strengthened confidence. This can be attributed in part to the new-found oil wealth of Indonesia which has reduced dependence on world aid councils where possible pressure might be applied.'[81]

In his 1975 'New Year Address to the Nation', observers noted that Suharto 'offered the judgment that Indonesia had begun the

year 1974 in a state of apprehension and ended in a relieved state of mind'.[82] Relief perhaps for Suharto and his agents, not, as Herb had written soon after the crackdown the previous January, for the cause of democracy; the 'critical voices … have been silenced and the country's jail population is swollen with many hundreds of new politicals'.[83]

Suharto's upbeat assessment of the state of the nation was predicated on the boom in its oil exports and foreign earnings. In the past two years, the export price of crude oil had increased 430 per cent, to comprise 77 per cent of total export revenue in the first half of 1974.[84] This international economic environment emboldened the New Order. The oil boom saw a revision of its projections in the second Five Year Development Plan (Replita II) about how it would finance its plans. Seventy-two per cent of funds would now come from domestic rather than foreign sources.[85] The government's efforts to stabilise prices and keep inflation under control were also showing signs of effectiveness. Its take-over of the huge foreign debt-ridden oil company Pertamina in mid-1974 was the major example, indicating an overall trend towards employing 'government controls over many aspects of economic activity. The sheer size of the government budget now gives the state sector a pervasive influence over the country's economic life.'[86] The early 1970s oil boom boosted the New Order's project of economic nationalism and also its grip on power. Nevertheless, the Pertamina debt had made a considerable dent in the national foreign currency reserves and security concerns in the wider region, especially in neighbouring Portuguese Timor, meant that Indonesia was also seeking large amounts of foreign economic and military aid. As Indonesia scholar Greg Fealy later observed, its strategic importance at this time also meant that in spite of its known human rights record, aid

continued to flood into the country from the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), which included Britain, USA, Japan, the Netherlands, Australia and West Germany.[87]

Although the student-led protests had been resoundingly crushed by early 1974, in Herb's mind they were symbolic of the potential for future challenges to the Indonesian government's authority. He claimed that the stagnant and 'uninteresting' period of New Order repressive politics and economic nationalism that preceded the protests had encouraged the sort of work he, Mortimer and others were doing in looking at Indonesia and its problems from an international and longer-term perspective. The excitement and in large-part unexpectedness of the 'Prague Spring' in late 1973 drew Herb back, however, to an argument for the type of analysis 'of politics conceived in narrower and shorter-range terms'.[88] Suddenly Indonesian politics was multidimensional again. The disaffection within the urban middle classes and factionalism within the army had signalled, albeit fleetingly, the potential for change. However, the subsequent total repression of the protest movement was used to crush what remained of the so-called Left – writers, intellectuals, academics – so that no Indonesia observer could be left in any doubt of the considerable and total power of the New Order regime.

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In May 1975 Herb delivered a paper entitled 'Southeast Asia and Neo-colonialism' to an Australian Institute of International Affairs (AIIA) conference on Australia, Papua New Guinea and Southeast Asia. In the paper he attempted a comparative and theoretical approach to the study of neo-colonial states in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and of Vietnam

and Cambodia. For the first time he grappled with dependency theory, a growing body of theory examining development and underdevelopment. The paper outlined six major trends in the ASEAN states in the preceding decade that supported the re-creation of characteristics of the colonial period in their economic, social and political structures. His far-reaching and necessarily generalised argument stimulated much discussion and debate, some of which questioned Herb's expertise in the application of comparative methods in his research.[89]

A month or so later in the mid-year break, Herb took a short trip to Port Moresby to visit Rex Mortimer, who had taken up a position as Chair of Political Studies at the University of Papua New Guinea, and where he had joined old Melbourne friends, historian Ken Inglis and his wife Amirah (who had been a member of the Australian Communist Party) and Ulf Sundhaussen. Rex and Herb had corresponded intensively since Rex's move to Sydney in 1970, especially about Herb's rethinking of modernisation and eventual shift to dependency theory. He sought Rex's counsel as he developed his Third World course, seeking guidance about what to read for it and comment on anything he wrote. Rex encouraged Herb's new direction and provided a sounding-board, often soothing his friend when he worried about his lack of writing.

After nearly twelve months of trying to cut loose from the professorship, Herb resigned as professor in October 1975 and, at his own request, became a Reader again. Many of his colleagues were surprised that he would take this step, which in academic terms was a backwards one in that it meant a significant salary reduction. These things, of course, mattered not at all to Herb, who was immensely relieved by the unburdening that his decision allowed for.[90]

Indonesia invades Timor

On 16 October 1975 five Australian-based journalists in East Timor to cover the civil strife in the former Portuguese colony were killed at Balibo by Indonesian forces in their covert invasion. Following the military coup in Lisbon in April 1974, Portugal was dismantling its colonies, and East Timor became vulnerable to Indonesian annexation. In September 1974, at a meeting between Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and Suharto in Indonesia, the Australian Government indicated that it would not 'obstruct Jakarta's efforts to win support for integration', although it paid what commentators soon labelled 'lip-service' to the notion that a process of self-determination in East Timor must first proceed.[91]

The growing threat of an Indonesian invasion of East Timor was a focus of protest in Australia as early as March 1975 when an AUS protest in Melbourne called for Australia to support an independent East Timor and for the Whitlam government to account for its empty rhetoric of support for self-determination while giving its implicit backing to an Indonesian invasion. During the second half of 1975, Australian non-government organisations under the umbrella of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) shipped relief supplies and aid to East Timor. In late November David Scott, Chair of CAA and Director of the Brotherhood of St Laurence, accompanied one of the shipments. Mark Raper, representing AWD, also accompanied the shipment, having been part of a delegation the previous month to set up a food distribution program and to meet Portuguese Governor Colonel Lemos Pires, who had withdrawn to Atauro, a small island off the coast of Dili.

David Scott credits Herb with encouraging and advising him from the moment he was invited to go to East Timor on

the ACFOA mission.[92] As many active and committed Australians became engaged with East Timor's struggle for independence, Herb continued in the role of adviser and supporter, largely behind the scenes. Scott returned from Dili on the last flight out before the Indonesian invading forces overran the city on 7 December 1975. He went immediately to Canberra to lobby the government on behalf of the ACFOA delegation to secure the passage out of Timor of Fretilin leaders Jose Ramos Horta, Rogerio Lobato and Mari Alkatiri, who were evacuated a few days later. In the months before the invasion, Monash student Helen Hill was in Portuguese Timor carrying out research for her honours thesis and was a key informant for Herb as events in Timor unfolded. She proved to be a vital contact with Fretilin when Jose Ramos Horta arrived in Melbourne in December 1974 and put him in touch with Herb, among others, for advice on what steps he should next take.

On the day of Indonesia's invasion a meeting was held in Melbourne of people concerned about the situation in Timor from which the Australian East Timor Association (AETA) emerged as a long-lasting advocacy body. The group's first item of business was to assist the campaign for the international recognition of East Timor by sending someone to the United Nations to help Ramos Horta put the case for self-determination. David Scott was nominated for the task.

David and Jose had few contacts in New York and little knowledge of the United Nations and its operations, and David again sought Herb's advice. Herb put him in touch with the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), which immediately directed David to the Secretary of the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation, which was about to debate the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Herb also put David and Jose in touch with two

graduates from Melbourne then living in New York, Richard Tanter and Sue Roff (Nichtherlein). Herb was sure that both would be willing assistants. Studying Indonesia at Monash in the early 1970s, Sue was among a small group of students close to Herb who played important roles as conduits between him and his Indonesian friends at times when he was unable to go to Indonesia. Sue carried messages, money and books and distributed them, in sometimes intriguing and clandestine ways, on Herb's behalf. In New York, Richard, Sue and her husband, Malaya historian Bill Roff, provided invaluable assistance to the East Timorese, performing vital administrative tasks, giving advice and, when necessary, accommodating Fretilin people in their own homes.

Argo Street threatened

In the midst of the crisis in Timor and shortly before Christmas, Victoria's Ministry of Education announced that it would close Argo Street School at the end of the school year. Annie, her fellow students and their parents were devastated by the news. Although its situation was known to be precarious, Herb and Betty shared a sense of disbelief that a decision could be made so quickly, particularly because parents and staff had been given no indication of imminent closure when they met Ministry officials three weeks earlier. The principal of Camberwell High School, to which Argo Street was annexed, had also been given no earlier notification of the closure.[93] Together with other parents, students and staff, the Feith family sprung into action, converging on the school for an emergency meeting.

All the Feiths were by this time fairly experienced activists and protesters. As well as attending the Vietnam moratoriums in 1970–71, Annie and David had accompanied their mother – Herb was unwell – to a rally that year protesting against the

Australian tour of the South African rugby team (the Springboks). At this rally police had used violence against protestors, and the experience of witnessing the clashes between mounted police and protesters made a strong and lasting impression on the three of them. As Herb wrote at the time, activism was very much a family affair: 'What a milestone in the radicalization of the younger Feiths! Annie just wouldn't have Bett tell her that there are nice policemen too … And even Robbie was drawn in.'[94]

Following a unanimous decision by the staff, students and parents to fight the school's closure, Herb and a fellow parent drafted a press statement and an urgent letter to the Minister of Education, Lindsay Thompson. They cited the unfairness of the 'sudden' decision to close 'our school' in contradiction of assurances they had been given about its future just a few weeks before. The school's projected enrolment for 1976 was 120 students, who, they stressed, would now face the difficult task of finding places in new schools in the last week of the school year. Their demands were not great – to discuss the reasons for the closure with Lindsay Thompson. The closure of the school, the group argued, had far wider implications for the future of experimental education in Victoria. Parents who were unable to afford private school fees were disadvantaged because their choices were limited.[95] This elicited no response from the Ministry. Five days and nights of protest, telephoning, interviews on radio and in the press and an around-the-clock sit-in at the school followed. Herb slept at the school for four nights, during which he continued to write letters of protest and called on all his political contacts to try to reach the Minister.

Herb later included the protest and sit-in at the school in Argo Street on a list of his 'luminous' experiences.[96] The camaraderie that he and Betty felt with the students, staff and parents, of

different generations and differing backgrounds, in their united support for the school was extremely energising. Although he had participated in teach-ins and the Vietnam Moratorium marches, Herb was confronted for the first time with the prospect of arrest and personal risk. The protesters were informed that they must leave the premises by the end of 18 December, the last day of school and the date of its formal closure. Security guards were sent to guard the building and evict the protesters, but instead they became fond of the protesters they were there to evict. The police, too, merely paid visits to the school and, when confronted by the older, more mature parents rather than ruffian students as they expected, left them to it. Nonetheless, there was constant uncertainty about the possibility of vandals or police raiding in the middle of the night, and Herb had with him a change of clothes and a toothbrush in case he was arrested.

The media paid considerable attention to the school's closure. Annie and Betty were interviewed on radio and by the press in a desperate effort to convey their view in the midst of largely negative and sensationalist reporting. Much of the coverage reported that the reasons for the closure of the school stemmed from complaints that drug-taking and sexual activity were rife among students – charges that students and staff alike denied. The week of intensive campaigning was emotionally draining. Herb was exhausted. Given the failure of their attempts to see the Minister of Education, parents, staff and students decided to march in protest up Bourke Street to Parliament House on the day before their eviction. As they approached its steep and imposing steps, they caught sight of none other than Minister Lindsay Thompson walking towards them. They rushed at him, placards waving, and followed him up the steps, at the top of which Thompson tripped, although it was not clear to all at the time

that he had not been pushed in the crush. Herb and Betty were devastated to think that he might have been pushed and immediately joined the call to retreat. They would clearly get nowhere with Thompson in these circumstances, even though this chance meeting was the closest they would get to the Minister. By Christmas they had abandoned the sit-in, and the school was closed.[97] Annie and some of her friends found places for the 1976 school year at other community schools – in Annie's case at Sydney Road Community School across the city in Brunswick.

The Feiths learned a great deal about activism and protest from their defence of the Argo Street school, including about the power of the media and peaceful protest and their limits as effective political tools. Even if they had managed to arrange a meeting with Lindsay Thompson, there was nothing to indicate that the Minister would have revised his decision to close the school given its short and troubled history. Nevertheless the group's inability to secure a face-to-face meeting with the Minister must surely have frustrated Herb, in particular, and his expectations, both as an eminent academic and as a citizen of a democratic country, that he could have access to elected politicians. It was indeed a revelatory practical lesson in his personal politics of activism and protest. This experience taught him that the act of petitioning and the writing of letters and submissions – the predominant forms of his protest and activism until then – were no longer enough.

Discovery

> I remain certain that the quest for truth cannot thrive outside the nourishment of mutual trust flowering into a commitment to friendship.
>
> Ivan Illich, 'The cultivation of conspiracy', p. 235

For Herb, 1976 was another year of sabbatical leave, and it provided him with a much-needed year away from Monash after his second and final term as department Chair. His colleagues Barbara Harvey and David Goldsworthy took over his teaching commitments. The previous year, as he considered how he would use this sabbatical, Herb was very attracted to the idea of taking the family and spending all or some of that time in Yogyakarta with colleagues at the University of Gadjah Mada in the Institute for Comparative Social Studies headed by Professor Soedjito Sosrodihardjo. In July, through Anton Lucas, an Australian student conducting his fieldwork in Yogyakarta at the time, Herb made tentative inquiries about whether this was a viable proposition, given his understanding for some years now that he was on Indonesia's banned list of foreign researchers. Herb knew UGM's Rector, Sukadji Ranuwihardjo, and had his support; however, Anton's enquiries among several UGM academics resulted in a fairly pessimistic assessment of Herb's chances.[98] Nonetheless he proceeded with his plans, perhaps encouraged by Sukadji, and sent his official letter of interest in a visiting academic position to UGM for 1976.[99] Some months later, as Anton had predicted and Herb had most probably expected, his application was rejected, as he told Dan Lev, 'thanks to BAKIN's [*Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara*: State Intelligence Coordinating Agency] telling Sukadji at Gadjah Mada that he can't have me there'.[100]

He had devised no firm alternative plans, but he soon resolved that an inability to get to Yogyakarta offered an good opportunity to do some much-needed writing on the long-planned manuscript proposed to Cornell University Press and perhaps on an analysis of the Suharto regime so far. This decision would have come as a particular relief to George Kahin, who had advised Herb against going to Indonesia on the basis that it was not the place

to get writing done. Indeed, his ever-encouraging and supportive America-based friends, including Kahin, Lev and Anderson, as well as Rex Mortimer, among others, put considerable – albeit subtle and gentle – pressure on Herb to produce some writing on Indonesia during 1976. They all knew from his prolific, energetic and intellect-laden correspondence that the material was all there. All that was needed was for Herb to write, and they waited for him to do so with high expectations of what he could contribute to the scholarship of the field.

Taking into account his recent experience and the advice of his friends, colleagues and Betty, Herb decided that his best chance of getting something done was to remove himself not only from Monash but also from the busyness of home to somewhere quiet and without distraction for a few months. So demanding was his workload in recent years that Herb had moved his bed into his study at home. He rented a cottage in the small bayside town of McCrae on the Mornington Peninsula, about an hour's train-ride away, returning to Glen Iris for the weekends. In mid-April Herb described his activities as 'Just reading, cooking, listening to the radio occasionally and looking at the ever changing seascape', as he waited, it seems, for his writer's block to lift: 'It's still too early to tell whether I'm getting somewhere with all that reshuffling of notes, and I've felt awfully depressed about my lack of progress. But there is a lot of really good material there, so I'm not without hope.'[101]

Herb was joined at McCrae by David Penny, also in search of a place to write and no doubt hopeful that he could stimulate Herb to write, too. David, who was at ANU by that time, and Herb had remained close friends since their time together as students at Cornell. They deeply enjoyed each other's company and conversation, which undoubtedly Herb had craved while tucked away

on his own with only the radio for company – an unnatural state for Herb. Although keen to make headway with a great deal of neglected reading on recent political theory and his new research, Herb had, since his time at Cornell, always worked in the midst of a community, exposed to constant questioning and conversation. His weekends at home allowed for some of this, and he met his students and colleagues, many of them recently returned from Indonesia, including former Jakarta embassy official Murray Clapham, medical doctor and graduate volunteer David Mitchell and Charles Coppel, whom he mined for the latest information and observations on Indonesia. But Herb was misguided in thinking that he would work more effectively away from the stimulation of others; it was, not surprisingly, a short-lived experiment that failed overall. Nonetheless, whether because of David Penny's presence or of his quiet thinking in his hours of tide-watching, Herb's mind stayed on the task of critiquing social science approaches to Indonesia since 1966, and much of his reading was a survey of this recent scholarship. He could not, however, avoid the strong pull towards exploring possibilities for an overarching theoretical frame to describe Indonesia's political system, perhaps in a comparative way.

These different emphases in his reading and thinking during his months at McCrae are evident in two papers he presented in May and July. The first paper, presented to the inaugural Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) conference in Melbourne on 16 May, was in part an attempt to do the writing and analysis which he had proposed to Cornell Press; that is, analysis of recent trends in writing on Indonesian politics and social science more broadly. He identified two contrasting theoretical trends in the field, one from an American Indonesianist and the other from a Dutch scholar, then offered a third possibility of his own.

His theoretical offering was to see the New Order as a neo-patrimonial regime, borrowing from Weber and, again more recently, S.N. Eisenstadt. Not unlike his dichotomous, although far less succinct, use of 'solidarity makers' and 'administrators' in *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, Herb suggested that the 'inside politics' of Indonesia since 1965 centres on 'tussles between technocratic and bureaucratic rationalizers and comparative advantage-minded internationalists on the one hand and nationalists, freewheeling appanage administrators, slush fund operators, monopolisers and protectors of military privilege on the other'.[102]

By floating a concept like 'neo-patrimonialism' to describe Indonesia's politics since 1965 Herb aimed to allow for the comparison of Indonesia with other countries 'to examine the political effects which sudden new wealth has had … and to look at comparable instances of the interaction between stabilizing and destabilizing forces within the world capitalist system'.[103]

A paper delivered in July 1976 to the Department of Politics at Monash, entitled '"Techno-fascism": A new form of tyranny?' was Herb's first attempt at such a comparative approach. He shifted on from the term 'neo-patrimonial' to describe instead 'rich-poor countries' experiencing recent rapid growth, and narrowed the requirement for comparison to include regimes that maintain a repressive level of political and social control over their people. He made the preliminary argument that countries as diverse as Brazil, Iran and South Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore may be compared on the basis that they are all strong state regimes engaged in rapid capitalist industrialisation open to international business, yet at the same time managing a firm level of social and political control and suppression.[104] This short seminar paper was the prelude to a

series of papers in which Herb grapples with dependency theory and his search for comparative models for Indonesian politics coalesces.

By mid-year, although he was, as always, disappointed with his writing output, Herb had in fact made some good progress. He hoped to build on this over the next four to six months, during which he travelled for conferences, research work and holiday. His somewhat eclectic and whirlwind itinerary reflected the way in which Herb was increasingly seeking inspiration for his work and world view from far and wide. He travelled to Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the United States, later recalling the highlights of his trip – dictated by people he wanted to visit rather than places he wanted to see – as his stopovers in Calcutta, London and Oslo. In Calcutta he was overwhelmed by the richness of its publishing culture and its huge number of bookshops. While visiting an old Cornell friend, Das Gupta, and his family, Herb was introduced to Krishna Sen, a young student and the girlfriend of one of his host's sons. Krishna and Herb developed a rapport. She was excited by the idea of Indonesia and within a year was enrolled at Monash as a graduate student under Herb's supervision. In London Herb spent time with Carmel Budiardjo and the Amnesty International people with whom he had worked on the political prisoner issue. But it was his meeting in Oslo with Johan Galtung, peace researcher and leading member of the World Order Models Project, that Herb recalled as the highest point of his world tour. He described Galtung to Rex as 'Really a very powerful figure, in a way which crosses boundaries of culture and time period in Illichian style'.[105] This first encounter with Galtung, a Norwegian who had founded the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo in 1962, was born in the same year as Herb, and who reciprocated Herb's warmth and enthusiasm;

developed into an almost Illich-like guru–pupil relationship in the coming decade.

Herb also spent a few days in Tehran in the middle of his tour, after which he met his father, who was on the way home from travelling for work and family visits to Europe and America, and spent a week with him in Israel – 'that country that we have both talked and argued about so much and which neither of us has seen'.[106] Although there is very little record of how Arthur and Herb spent their week together, accounts of past and future holidays they took together lead one to surmise that their week in Israel would not have been free of tense moments between father and son. However, undoubtedly for both of them, there would have been constant reminders of Lily and her commitment to the State of Israel, perhaps serving to temper and inform their debate and observations. In his few remaining notes from the trip, Herb expressed no sense of personal connectedness with the place or people. Indeed, his first impressions are somewhat disparaging and unfavourable. For Herb the visit created yet another opportunity for reflection on the state of the First and Third World divide, modernisation and the chance for peace, with which he was increasingly preoccupied:

> I'm becoming less Third Worldist as I travel around more – less hostile to the kind of modernization which is proceeding so incredibly fast in so many places, more aware of its benefits as well as its great costs, eg. its capacity to generate new cultural integration, less sure that feasible alternatives to it exist, more inclined to see the Chinese road as special case, inclined to see countries like Iran, Malaysia, perhaps Brazil too as likely to continue in a path of capitalist modernization.

> That means seeing certain trends as less unfavourable than I'd previously seen them – as well as seeing the prospects for revolutionary change, institutional inversion, etc as less favourable, at least in the short term.[107]

He concluded his trip by spending seven weeks in the MIP at Cornell for what he had anticipated would be an intensive period of writing: 'I've only been in Ithaca 36 hours, but feel very much at home here, back in the building where I did a lot of my thesis writing, and where the atmosphere seems every bit as friendly as it was then. There won't be the slightest excuse if I get no writing done in this environment!'[108]

Not a great deal of writing eventuated, however, but the renewal of his relationships with Ben, George and others at MIP was, as Rex described it, 'a feast of intellectual exchange, and a bit of well-directed political activity'.[109] By now Herb was using quite a different scale to measure his achievements: 'I thought I'd get a lot more writing done than I managed to finish – general interpretative stuff on Suharto's Indonesia. But I did get quite a few steps further as a result of preparing four seminars for Cornell.'[110] The success of his trip could not be measured in numbers of words written; it lay in his meetings with old and new friends whose conversation about the First World–Third World divide provided Herb with a sense of renewed confidence in his work.

NINE

Imagining peace (1977–91)

> Fortunately great crises often generate correspondingly creative responses, and terrible acts of cruelty and inhumanity sometimes call forth generous and compassionate responses. I say that in a spirit of gratitude as well as hope, for I am one of those who owes his life to the fact that Australia was willing to open its doors to a sizeable number of European Jewish refugees in 1938–9, at a time of considerable unemployment.
>
> Herb Feith, 'Australian immigration policy and Asia'.

IN AN INTERVIEW for *The Herald* in November 1977, Herb told the journalist that over the last few years he had become 'deprofessionalised'. He was, he said, no longer making a distinction between his role as a citizen and his role as an academic. His decision to shake off the added responsibilities of a senior academic role meant that he could abandon his sense of obligation

to follow a career path such as others might have expected of him. This decision was liberating on many levels and opened the way for Herb to embrace more fully alternative approaches to understanding the Third World–First World divide, peace studies and his own activism. It was also, however, paralysing in that it offered unlimited choices and freedoms, which often allowed Herb's tendency towards to procrastination, self-doubt and introspection to overwhelm him.

In many ways during the next thirteen years Herb faced some of the lowest and most challenging times of his life. The deaths of a number of his close friends and family, some of which were sudden and tragic, as well as his own near-death experience in a cycling accident, occurred in relatively quick succession. This period is marked by Herb's extensive and deep depression and grieving, which brought strain and stress into his professional and private family lives. All the while, Herb was struggling to embark on a new field of teaching and researching. This, which meant building a new community of colleagues, considering options for fieldwork research and establishing himself as a scholar in a new field. Although his journey proved less than easy, peace studies was to also provide Herb with a path to deeper, personal relief. As Arthur Kleinman explained, '… seeing the world as dangerous and uncertain may lead to a kind of quiet liberation, preparing us for new ways of being ourselves, living in the world, and making a difference in the lives of others.'[1]

Peace, the environment and the anti-uranium movement

Herb's worldwide touring in late 1976 had taken him further from Indonesia than he had been for a long time: to Iran and

Israel, India and Norway. Once home in Melbourne, his considerable interest and growing networks in the peace movement and leftist–activist circles occupied more of his time. The burgeoning peace movement in Australia had found a strong rallying point in the anti-nuclear protest action of the 1970s. Through his contact with peace activists and fellow Melbourne academics Joseph Camilleri and Harry Redner, Jim Falk and others, Herb became mobilised together with an increasing number of Australians, by the hot political issue of uranium mining in the Northern Territory. In the mid-1970s environmental groups, religious groups and left-wing unions combined to oppose changes in government uranium mining policy. As the Labor government and its successor moved closer to supporting uranium mining in Australia, waves of protest action across the country attracted large crowds, some of the biggest of which were in Melbourne. Under the banner of the Uranium Moratorium (modelled on the Vietnam moratoriums) up to 15 000 people joined a mass protest in Melbourne in late 1976. After the release of the two reports of the government's Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, which warned of the dangers of mining and processing uranium, a much larger crowd of about 20 000 people took to the streets in Melbourne and more than 50 000 nationwide in August 1977.

Historians of Australia's environment movement point in particular to an earlier protest at Swanson Docks on 2 July 1977 as marking 'a crucial moment in the campaign against the mining and export of uranium', which they argue 'ensured that anti-nuclear sentiments took hold among conservationists and in the Australian population more widely'.[2] Herb and Betty Feith were among the protesters on Swanson Dock that wintry Saturday. They were there as a direct consequence of a call issued by a Uniting Church minister, whom Betty respected, to join the protest for, as she

explained, 'as a member of a Church Conference on record as exhorting its members to protest against the mining of uranium in Australia at this time, I had a further responsibility to act upon that resolution'.[3]

The purpose of the demonstration was to block the passage of the *Columbus Australia*, which was carrying a load of yellowcake from Mary Kathleen Mine bound for the United States. The protest had been hastily organised following a tip-off from the Seamen's Union to the Movement Against Uranium Mining that the *Columbus Australia* had docked the previous evening. Similar protest action at Lucas Heights in Sydney a few weeks earlier had failed to block the ship's passage and resulted in the arrest of protesters. Herb and Betty participated in this protest at a time when they were increasingly concerned about environmental issues in Illichian – and increasingly 'peace studies' – terms, as well as in terms of their growing personal commitment to the protection of the environment. A few years earlier, when Herb gave up driving to and from Monash and took up cycling, he explained he did so as 'a general expression of ecological self-consciousness, plus a desire to be more self-reliant and to show myself that I was still flexible enough to change a significant aspect of my life'.[4] The family had also actively opposed the planned F19 (now the Monash Freeway), which passed within 200 metres of their home.

The sit-in protest at Swanson Docks had the backing of the Waterside Workers' Federation whose members refused to load the ship on the basis that the presence of the protesters made it unsafe to do so. In meetings with crew and police, the union vowed to black-ban the ship if police moved against the protesters. The peaceful crowd of about a hundred adults and children on the wharf chanted and coaxed the German crew of the *Columbus Australia* to join them in singing German songs.

The wind whipping off the water was chilly, and they lit fires in drums to provide some warmth. Demonstrators described the diverse collection of people as generating their own 'human warmth … there was an immense feeling of liberation amongst the group as we were on about truth.'[5] Late that evening about forty policemen and four mounted police moved in on the protesters, most of whom were seated, in Betty's case, knitting, and singing 'We Shall Not Be Moved'. Many were injured and more than thirty arrested.[6] Betty and Herb were both caught up in the violent melee. In her version of these events taken down a few days later, Betty told of her extreme terror in those moments:

> I had only just time to get my knitting needles out of harm's way before I was pushed to the ground. I found myself lying on the ground lying under a horse. Before I had time to get up a policeman trod on my hand and thigh. Then two policemen dragged me along the ground. I was holding onto my husband with one arm as he was dragged also, my other arm was being severely twisted. Then I was forcibly separated from my husband and pushed towards the other members of the group … People were crying and screaming hysterically …[7]

Herb was struck down by the mounted police, thrown into the back of the police van and taken to Russell Street police headquarters. One of his fellow detainees later recounted her experience: 'Four people were thrown into the van. One was Herb, he was clutching his stomach. Debbie told me that she had seen him kicked in the stomach by a horse's hoof … The van drove away, accelerating hard and turning corners hard causing the van to sway over the road.'[8]

Most of those arrested were students and union representatives; they were released a few hours later charged on summons with trespassing.[9] Whatever injuries Herb might have sustained were largely forgotten as he later revelled somewhat in the experience of the demonstration and his arrest. For him it was a rite of passage of sorts: 'a kind of political baptism'.[10] The Feith family, including David, who had protested at the docks in the days before the protesters' altercation with police, continued to follow the protest, which continued for several days more. The following morning Betty went to church wearing a placard around her neck advertising the time and place of the next shift meeting of protesters that evening; 'another first; to advertise something even silently in a Church service, not specifically Parish business', and on Monday Rob and a busload of school friends went down to the docks.[11]

The heavy-handed police actions caused widespread public outrage. The Waterside Workers' Federation declared a twenty-four-hour strike and its timing – coinciding with the Australian Labor Party Conference in Perth – forced the government to take action. The daughter of then ALP Party President Bob Hawke had been among the protestors at Swanson Dock, and he had condemned the police use of force, calling it 'brutal and frightening'.[12] The conference passed a motion declaring a moratorium on uranium mining, although it was challenged soon after by pro-mining factions in the party and the union movement. Herb and Betty's association with the anti-uranium movement and attendance at the Swanson Dock protest was an indication of the extent to which it had become a broad social movement encompassing groups linked to other social issues.[13]

Just over a month after the Swanson Dock demonstration, Herb's growing commitment both to an emerging global

ecological consciousness and to his personal improvement again brought him grave danger. In the depths of winter, on 8 August 1977 about 11 pm, Herb was cycling home from a student gathering at Monash when a car struck him from behind. He recalled that it had been a perfect night for cycling, so he had declined an offer of a lift home. Herb was flung over the roof of the car travelling at an estimated speed of more than a hundred kilometres an hour and suffered serious head injuries, a fractured fibula, cuts and bruising. Given that he was riding without reflective clothing and a helmet, he was extremely lucky not to have suffered more serious injury. Betty was awoken in the early hours by police knocking at her door. Her son, they told her, had been involved in an accident and was in hospital. Their information relating to a male cyclist out so late at night led them to assume that the victim was much younger than Herb's forty-six years.

In the wake of his accident, some colleagues and concerned friends conveyed their view of the inappropriateness of cycling as a mode of transportation. As Herb saw it, though: 'The kind of people who put pressure on me not to resume cycling are people who could tolerate cycling from young people but were clearly embarrassed by someone of my age.' They encouraged Herb to give up 'his eccentric ways' and to stop cycling for the 'sake of his family'.[14] The accident, a week in hospital and a further six weeks of recuperation at home had no such effect. He chose instead to take the advice of one of his dearest friends, Dan Lev: 'The world is filled with assorted fools and killers, please be careful. Ride your bike only in full armor.'[15] When he resumed cycling, Herb donned a reflective vest and 'head guard', unusual at that time, and became involved in a road safety campaign that aimed to raise awareness of cyclists and improve their access to designated

bike-paths, predicating that 'If people knew there were safe ways to get to and from work by their bicycle, thousands would leave their cars at home'.[16]

Indonesian students return to the streets

In the Indonesian general elections held in May 1977, the government party, Golkar, again won easily. This time, however, there was considerable dissatisfaction, particularly among Muslim groups and students, with the way the elections were conducted. As Suharto's re-election for his third five-year term as President approached, this dissatisfaction would grow into what one of Herb's students, David Bourchier, would later describe as a broader social disquiet focused on a range of 'antigovernment criticisms'.[17] Crop failure in Java and the government's feeble attempts to tackle corruption, on top of the evidence of foul play in the elections, were increasing the levels of frustration and discontent among the Indonesian people.

In October 1977 the trial of Javanese mystic Sawito, who had been charged under subversion laws, which had been notoriously used against those arrested in the 1974 Malari riots, became a focus for wider protest. Sawito was on trial because he had accused the elite of corruption and the nation's leaders of moral degradation and because he had called for Suharto's resignation. Charismatic Sawito, whom Bourchier characterised as 'a spokesman for the constellation of interests represented by the emergent "middle-class front"',[18] used his court appearances as a platform to voice his opposition to the President and attracted large crowds of supporters. Opposition to the regime gathered momentum during the trial, culminating in a nationally coordinated protest march of

thousands of students on 10 November, National Heroes' Day. The following day, alleged leaders of the movement were arrested and accused of threatening the forthcoming congressional session.

At some stage during his recuperation in August and September 1977, Herb received word from someone close to the Indonesian Embassy that if he chose to apply for a visa, he would most probably be granted one. Herb had received similar messages some years earlier, from none other than Ali Moertopo via Ulf Sundhaussen, who was then in Port Moresby, inviting Herb to return to Indonesia as a welcome guest. On these occasions Herb either did not trust their sincerity or simply was not yet willing to return to Indonesia. In November 1977, however, the student protests and the general sense of unrest in the lead-up to Suharto's re-election gave Herb renewed hope that change was possible.

Herb applied for and was granted a visa to spend December 1977 to February 1978 in Indonesia. The idea that someone in the embassy may have taken pity on him after his accident holds some weight, given that John Legge had only recently been denied a visa and others were experiencing lengthy delays in the application process. One of Herb's students, Lea Jellinek, had written to him in September of her uncertainty about applying for a research visa at that time, going so far as to say that, from her conversations with people at Lembaga Ilmu Pengatahuan Indonesia (LIPI; Indonesian Institute of Sciences, she thought 'there must be some sort of black ban over Monash scholars generally'.[19]

Until his departure, however, Herb was still unsure about the wisdom of his decision to go, feeling that to visit now after all this time would somehow be a betrayal of his convictions. As he wrote to Jamie Mackie, then in the United States as a visiting researcher at Cornell, 'I must say there is a strong pull in the other direction. Not just pride in my record of years of eschewing the temptations

of Jakarta, but also a feeling that I ought to write up that stuff that I was working on in 1976.'[20] In contrast to George Kahin's advice a year earlier, Jamie was firm in his reply urging his colleague to get back to Indonesia if he could: 'I think you *certainly should* go to Indonesia this summer if you can – if only to arm you more strongly to pontificate on the ills of the current regime (against the argument that you are now out of touch).'[21] Jamie took issue with Herb's main reason against going, remarking, 'Your brief reference to your sense of pride at having kept (or been kept) out of the country for so many years disturbs me … unless you keep recharging those batteries of experience and knowledge you're allowing your reputation – political influence – to become eroded at its strongest point.'

More generally, and in terms of his obligation to the field in which he had been a leader for almost twenty years, Jamie was particularly insistent, no doubt reflecting the sentiment of many of Herb's colleagues, that 'the community of scholars needs you in at the unspectacular body-punching part of the fighting (whatever "the fight" means exactly in this image), for I suspect that the action will be limited, unspectacular and unheroic for some years to come, not a suitable arena for saintly politics and the noble moral gesture of maintaining one's distance and one's principles.'

Jamie Mackie's responses to Herb's equivocations about making this trip reflect the growing distance that had been building for several years between the two men's positions on how to understand the New Order regime. Jamie, like Heinz Arndt and others, thought the successes of the New Order program of development, led by a close friend and head of Indonesia's National Planning Bureau, Widjojo Nitisastro, should be recognised as positive for Indonesia on the whole.

Returning

Whether or not Jamie Mackie's urgings influenced him, the attraction of the student protest movement and other hopeful signs from those opposed to the Indonesian government eventually persuaded Herb to go to Indonesia in the summer of 1977–78. It was his first visit in more than seven years, and he was, not surprisingly, nervous. His physical and intellectual return to Indonesia had its problems. Herb experienced some anxiety about whom to talk to there. On this first return visit and subsequent visits in the next few years his network of source people changed again. Those he interviewed were no longer from among elite ranks in politics and the bureaucracy, but from among those agitating on the margins of Indonesian political life. There were some he already knew and some new ones, including Dawam Rahardjo, from the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information (Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial; LP3ES), student activists Marsillam Simanjuntak and Arief Budiman, religious moderates such as Jesuit priest Romo Mangunwijaya and Muslim leader Abdurrahman Wahid. The political situation had vastly changed since his last visit. The immediate question he confronted was not easily answered: what project should he work on?

Herb did not choose a project of inquiry as such, but more a program that emphasised sharing his knowledge and educating his Indonesian friends from NGOs and intellectual circles about the relevance of peace thinking to their situation under and in opposition to the New Order. Taking what he had learned in the preceding five years, he wanted his Indonesian friends to understand the importance to them and their local problems of taking a global view on issues like conflict resolution, human rights, environmental protection and the anti-nuclear movement.

Some of the students he spoke to on this and subsequent visits in the 1980s labelled his ideas as utopian, but others, particularly from the anti-New Order opposition movements associated with NGOs and intellectual groups, welcomed them. For these people, like Taufik Rahzen and his student discussion group,[22] Herb was an essential and unique source of new ideas from outside. From this trip onwards, even more than before, Herb went to Indonesia armed with reams and reams of photocopied material on peace, new theoretical thinking, media clippings and books.

In their analysis of the development of the social sciences in Indonesia, Indonesian sociologists Vedi Hadiz and Daniel Dhakidae point to the fact that 'it is generally regarded that Indonesian scholars have contributed much less to the international academic literature on their own country than scholars of neighbouring countries'. The contributors to their collection, *Social Science and Power in Indonesia*, consider the impact of the thirty-two years of New Order rule during which the state exercised considerable control over the tertiary education sector, influencing what was taught and researched, which theoretical paradigms gained prominence and which were marginalised. This led to what Hadiz and Dhakidae term the 'bureaucratization of social science', wherein social science careers and state patronage were closely intertwined and academics were regularly recruited into state bureaucracies. The social sciences were largely co-opted into the New Order's modernisation and development program, thereby limiting the influence of alternative views and causing a dearth of rigorous critical scholarship.[23]

In this climate, at the peak of the developmentalist paradigm's hegemony in Indonesia in the 1970s and 1980s, one of the very few vehicles for such scholarship and debate was the LP3ES and its prestigious journal, *Prisma*. Funded from foreign sources,

LP3ES, along with a few other small groups centred on universities and NGOs in the 1970s, developed critical social knowledge aimed at 'exposing the assumptions and theories of modernization that dominated thinking about development in the Soeharto era'.[24] In the late 1970s Herb Feith was drawn to the small group of critical thinkers associated with LP3ES and *Prisma*. He was attracted to their search for alternative ideas about Indonesia's future and to their commitment to rigorous intellectual inquiry, which reached out to Indonesians from all areas of society.

For *Prisma* editors Dawam Rahardjo and Daniel Dhakidae, Herb's contributions to debate, his encouragement and his enthusiasm for the continuing struggle for critical and alternative views to be heard, were vital. His contribution to the building of Indonesia's knowledge of itself and of the rest of the world is remembered and calculated quite differently within Indonesia from its assessment by colleagues outside the country. As mentioned, Herb delivered armloads of books, journals, photocopied articles and new research, either personally or via other travellers to Indonesia. He brought new ideas to what informants described as a starved intellectual landscape, introducing new thinkers and theories from the outside world at a time when critical thinking and its products were suppressed in Indonesia. Herb was considered to be a beacon of light and hope, a channel for new opportunities and, therefore, not only as a person of great knowledge but also as someone with the power to bring and disseminate knowledge. When he got home, Herb wrote to Illich about his return:

> The Indonesia trip was a great experience in many ways. Lots of very depressing things – and some of them have got worse with the heightening of the repression last month. But a great deal was heart-warming. And I think I've found a way of

> relating to the country and people honourably and intimately, that is of keeping lines open rather more than I could in the seven years that I didn't visit the country.[25]

Herb's information gathering and disseminating tasks went both ways. He was equally concerned to provide Australians with a deeper and more objective understanding of Indonesia, particularly when it came to the human rights situation. In Melbourne Herb rallied a group of fellow Indonesia observers to produce a news bulletin containing summaries and translations of news from Indonesia and from Australia and around the world on the situation in Indonesia that cast a critical eye on the New Order and its relations with business and the military. Known as the Indonesia Action Group, the group produced, mostly from the Feiths' kitchen table, the *Indonesia News Selections* bulletin more or less bimonthly from 1977 to 1981. The group, made up of Herb's students, fellow activists and colleagues, including Mas Hidris and Margaret Kartomi and Tiong Djin Siauw, published their work anonymously. Their mission statement included on the cover of each edition was clear: to create awareness of 'the widespread deprivation of human rights in Indonesia; economic and political repression in Indonesia; foreign, especially Australian, involvement in supplying military aid to the Indonesian government and in the exploitation of Indonesia's people and resources'.[26] The bulletins commenced at about the time the New Order was again victorious in highly orchestrated and by no means free elections. It had a close relationship with the group Carmel Budiardjo headed from London, Tapol, and with Amnesty International. This group of Indonesia watchers and human rights activists were clearly fed up with the Australian and Western press coverage of the situation in Indonesia, where there was a great deal more

dissent than outsiders were led to believe by their coverage, and started the *News Selections* to counter it.

The August 1977 bulletin began with an excerpt from the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia: 'The aim of the Indonesian government is "to protect the whole Indonesian people and country; to promote public welfare; to raise the standard of living".' The editor continued, 'Many Indonesians have expressed (as in the following press reports) their deep dissatisfaction with the lack of achievement of these ideals. The most basic of human rights have been denied the great majority of Indonesians, many of whom see "social justice" as the pipe dream.'[27]

News and reports were organised under such headings as 'Political unrest', 'Dissent', 'Poverty', 'Political prisoners', 'Military news', 'Corruption', 'East Timor/West Papua', 'Foreign Investment' and 'Australian–Indonesian relations'. They covered trials of dissidents, including Sawito, and included translations from anti-Suharto underground publications. The production of a bulletin that featured translations of news from Indonesian publications had its origins perhaps in the work of a translation and discussion group that Jamie, Herb and a small number of honours and graduate students formed in the early 1960s. This was, however, a decidedly political exercise in its own right and, together with a newsletter begun in 1975 covering Timor issues, 'Timor Information Services', was an early precursor to the magazine *Inside Indonesia*, which emerged in 1983.[28]

Sources of hope

Upon his return to Melbourne in February 1978 Herb wrote a paper entitled 'The Indonesian student movement of 1977–78'. It was full of hope and tentative predictions of the end of the New Order regime. The rise of another student-led opposition to the

Suharto regime had once again buoyed Herb and other radical Indonesianists to grasp its potential to spawn much wider, middle-class discontent and revolt. Many of his Indonesianist colleagues in Australia thought Herb's optimism was misplaced and unwarranted. The regime had, after all, closed six newspapers and all student unions at universities across the country in late January. Following a mass rally in Jakarta, at which the poet Rendra performed his work, Rendra and more than a hundred students were arrested. Protests continued in the lead-up to the March sitting of the MPR, but there was little action thereafter, because their leadership had been decimated and their base fragmented.[29] Although Herb's early 1978 insights into the current goings-on in Indonesia were, as ever, deeply interesting and important, his colleagues in Australia and the United States saw no grounds for his optimistic predictions about the regime's demise. In the weeks thereafter, Suharto was successfully re-elected President by the MPR in March 1978, and the student movement and its supporters were suppressed in ways reminiscent of the period following the 1974 Malari riots.

At a broader level of analysis, however, Herb was more than ever committed to dependency theory and more convinced by what was emerging from his thinking on repressive development regimes. The connection between underdevelopment in the Third World and overdevelopment in the First was, he continued to argue even more strongly, the most pressing and 'hidden' issue in the analysis of Indonesia's so-called development and repressive regime at this point in its history. The Suharto government, Herb argued, had become a bridgehead for a new form of external or colonial domination through its reintegration of Indonesia into the global capitalist system. Repression of popular politics was crucial to this reintegration.

In 1978 the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash hosted a seminar featuring Jamie Mackie and Herb taking opposing sides on the question of Indonesia's development in the past decade. As their correspondence of late 1977 indicates, Jamie and Herb had grown apart ideologically and analytically on this issue. The chasm between their interpretations of Indonesia's economics and politics had also had implications for their friendship. When asked his advice on the wisdom of setting up the debate, mutual friend Dan Lev had warned Herb and Jamie against it with a cautionary note, '… the interweaving of Indonesia with my own ideological evolution makes it hard to set either one out.'[30] Both Herb and Jamie felt that Dan had simply got it wrong and went ahead with their debate.

It was in part a send-off for Jamie, who was moving to ANU in July, to take up a position in the new Department of Political and Social Change in RSPS.[31] At this time and in the years that followed these colleagues and old friends became, they both later agreed, largely estranged, either because they had not tried to bridge the physical distance when Jamie left Monash or because of differing ideology or, most likely, a combination of the two. Some years later they sought to mend the rift between them and rekindle what had been and continued to be common passions and interests, for they were fundamentally bound by a deep respect for and mutual commitment to Indonesia. Indeed, they had principally devised the exchange in 1978 as a means for furthering the larger debate that had been brewing in the field since the publication of *Showcase State* in 1973. For the most part, Herb's 'Reply' to Jamie Mackie's analysis of the New Order and its development achievements continued the ideological line represented by *Showcase State*. Herb argued for analysis of Indonesia to be given a global context which recognises, as Illich encouraged,

that the excesses of the rich world have consequences in the poor world, and for our increasing interdependence.

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Herb's 1977 activism on anti-uranium and disarmament issues had meant that he had turned his focus to Australia's role in these global issues. It was indeed part of his growing vision of the irrevocable interdependence among peoples and nations. In his lecture in August 1978 as part of a series on Indonesia hosted by the CSEAS and Australia–Indonesia Association (AIA), Herb concluded by calling on his Australian audience to do likewise: '… it seems to me that time has passed when people like us here could concern themselves with the overcoming of underdevelopment in Indonesia without also concerning themselves at least equally with the struggle against overdevelopment in Australia.'[32]

In the next few years his concern with issues relating to Australia's place in the global complex of interdependent nations grew, not simply with foreign policy issues but in terms of what was now seen as a far more complex, multilateral and interdependent system of international relations.

Illich's Melbourne visit, August 1978

> Ivan Illich is a controversial and enigmatic thinker. A cultural revolutionary with a playful, but at times ironic sense of humour. His aim is to 'smile institutions apart', to liberate men from ideological concepts and institutional myths by destroying the hold that they have over their minds …
>
> Flyer for two free public lectures, August 1978[33]

After his visit to Cuernavaca, although he had harboured reservations about Illich, Herb maintained a correspondence with his teacher. So, when Illich expressed his interest in visiting Australia sometime in 1978, Herb immediately stepped into the role of his tour organiser. Illich's visit in mid-August was short – only four days in Melbourne. He gave two public lectures, one at Monash and the other at Melbourne University, and also made himself available for media interviews. But Illich was eager to allow sufficient time for long talks with Herb and to see the new director of the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Cambodia historian David Chandler, the son of old friends from New York. Illich was godfather of the Chandlers' daughter Margaret, then eleven years old. He spent his first night in Melbourne with the Chandlers before moving to the Feiths, where the entire family, including Herb's son Rob and father Arthur, revelled in his company and conversation, which included a long discussion with Arthur in German about Karl Kraus.

So large was the crowd that turned out to hear Illich at Monash's Blackwood Hall that many were turned away. Herb described the lecture a day later in Melbourne University's Public Lecture Theatre on 'Language as a Commodity' as 'intellectually very powerful'. By the third day of Illich's visit, their intense contact caused Herb to experience what he described as 'my sense of being challenged to discipleship'.[34] As he wrote to Illich a few weeks later, 'The four days you were here were marvellously illuminating for me. They helped me clarify a number of intellectual positions as well as giving me a sense of stocktaking and renewal in relation to my life as a whole.'[35] Before he left, Illich encouraged Herb to become a central part of his Australian network and to get in touch with others within it. They also discussed the prospect of Illich returning again soon for a longer

period, possibly organised around a series of workshops. When he departed on the fourth day, it was with a 'warm hug' and the promise of future visits and correspondence. The visit left Herb on what he described as a 'high',[36] which carried him into the coming months with a renewed sense of enthusiasm for his work and activism.

In addition to the inspiring effect of Illich's visit, Herb began in 1978 to follow more closely the World Order Model's Project (WOMP) and its visionary approach to peace, which is embedded in the Third World. He began to engage with the work of some of its key figures, including co-founders Richard Falk and Johan Galtung, by whom he had been so impressed when they met in Oslo in 1976, and Elise and Kenneth Boulding and Joanna Macy, whose work on peace studies was closely connected to inner spirituality. Like Illich, they influenced Herb in ways that were to prove intellectually and spiritually enlivening. In his 1976 meeting with Galtung and his 1979 meeting with Falk at the WOMP conference, Herb was attracted to the overwhelmingly positive outlook of their approaches. Of Falk he later wrote, '… he is a beacon of hope. He provides down-to-earth arguments for the plausibility of far-reachingly hopeful goals.'[37]

In 1978 Herb taught his 'Indonesian Political Economy' course for the last time; it was to be the last course on Indonesian politics he would teach at Monash. In practical terms, Barbara Harvey's departure at the beginning of 1978 also played a part in the timing of his relinquishing this area of teaching, together with the fact that there were now other Indonesianists who could take it up. The following year he taught 'Rich World, Poor World', another progression from his former first-year subject 'Third World' and a third-year seminar course, 'Centre–Periphery Politics'. This decision was indicative of his general

trend away from researching or teaching Indonesia and its politics as a discrete subject towards understanding and teaching it within a global context.

Correspondence with former student Ken Ward at this time sheds light on what Herb saw as the main objectives in his work and the sometimes competing, sometimes complementary lines of inquiry and action therein. In June 1979 Ken, then at the Australian Embassy in Tokyo, sent Herb some comments on his recent writing on development in Asia and repressive regimes. Contrasting Herb's work with that of the German-born intellectual George Lichtheim, on the history and theory of socialism and Marxism, Ken commented that Herb had a 'tendency to classify, define, exemplify, pose rhetorical or non-rhetorical questions which conveys a certain lack of confidence, tentativeness, hesitancy which at times border on wishy-washyness'.[38] Herb's reply to his former student's frank criticisms was to first express his thanks for them but to concede little to their efficacy. His response is also a clear map of how he sees his role in the academy and society at this time:

> I guess I'll always have a tendency to wishy-washiness in my writing, as in my personality, but it's something I'll try to keep a watch out for. I'm sure it would do me good to re-read Lichtheim. Am a bit less penitent about my lack of a solid foundation in economics and Marxism … Not sure why, but it probably has to do with a sense that I'm already stretched very wide, trying to keep up on Indonesia and on Third World things in general and to contend with the way this (and my Illich-ism and Galtung-ism) forces me to do a bit of reading and thinking (and occasional acting) in relation to societies like this. All of those might be equally seen as good

reasons not to run away from systematic theory. So perhaps it is my eclecticism that is at the basis for my dodging the challenge you are presenting. And indeed eclecticism may be a euphemism for superficiality. But I do think there is a role for people like this too as mediators between the world of theory and that of the morning radio news.[39]

Release of *tapol*, 1978–79

After Suharto's re-election in March 1978 and suppression of so-called subversives, the political atmosphere in Indonesia was extremely oppressive for opposition groups. The 'floating mass' policy, together with economic growth that benefited small and medium business and farmers, further emboldened the New Order. In the wake of the success of its so-called counter-revolutionary offensive, the Indonesian government during 1978 and 1979 released 12 000 of those who had been imprisoned in the wake of the September 1965 'coup', including those imprisoned on the infamous Buru Island. Indonesia analyst and activist Max Lane argues that the timing of this mass release of *tapol* (political prisoners) indicated the level of the New Order's confidence that they no longer posed a real threat in such an apolitical and still highly anti-communist society.[40] It also indicated the success of the New Order's rigorous propaganda program through school curricula and the official version of the history of the alleged coup,[41] which demonised and stigmatised communists and any intellectuals and activists of the Left.

Some high-profile detainees, such as novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer, were released from Buru Island as were some of Herb's friends, including Budiardjo (husband of Carmel) and Mas Hardoyo. Herb had known Hardoyo as a political actor in the

late 1950s and early 1960s. At this time Hardoyo was the youngest member (1960–65) of the Gotong Royong DPR (national parliament) representing the youth functional group and national chair (1962–64) of the communist-leaning Concentratie Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (CGMI; Indonesian Student Movement Concentration) and from 1964 a member of the PKI Politbureau's foreign affairs and youth departments.[42] Arrested in 1967, Hardoyo, or Har, as his friends called him, was detained without trial for more than twelve years, some of which he spent on Buru Island. In the last months of his imprisonment, Hardoyo and other *tapol* had shared prison cells with those arrested in late 1977 and early 1978, including student Marsillam Simanjuntak and lawyer Yap Thiam Hiem. Har and Herb met again after his release through mutual friends Onghokham, Goenawan Mohamad and Marsillam and became close friends and regular correspondents. In coming years, Herb often stayed as a guest at Hardoyo's modest home.

Life awaiting the former *tapol* on the outside was extremely hard. Like most former prisoners, Hardoyo found it very difficult to find employment; the *tapol* status (ET: *eks tapol*) recorded on their identity cards carried a pervasive stigma that affected their wider family and children. As Lane writes, 'By 1978, the labeling of the PKI as "traitors" and evil was the only public discourse.'[43] Hardoyo was not spared such labelling. After his released in 1979, like many other former *tapol*, Har and his family lived, as Herb described it, 'a hand to mouth existence', translating academic books from English into Indonesian and writing journalist pieces under pseudonyms.[44] A convert to Christianity during his imprisonment, Hardoyo also worked after his release at the Indonesian Council of Churches under Yap Thiam Hiem. Nonetheless, despite the help of his friends in the media and universities, he

struggled to find secure continuous employment, relying on those friends for work or financial support, which Herb and others were always happy to provide.

Rex

Herb's project for the first half of 1979 was a working conference on class formation and its applications in Indonesia-related scholarship. With his colleagues Rex Mortimer, now in Sydney, and Ron Hatley, Don Miller at Monash, and others, he wanted to examine how recent applications of Marxist and structuralist theoretical traditions in analysis of politics and societies in South American, South Asian and African contexts might also be relevant to Indonesian studies. The conference's aims were not small, and Herb's own preoccupations reverberated through them: 'We see it as part of a search for conceptual frameworks through which the growing body of research findings on Indonesian history, economics, society and politics can be understood, both as part of the dynamic whole and as particular manifestations of processes of transformation which are general in the Third World.'[45]

The conference was held at Monash over a weekend in August. Herb opened with an introduction to the theories under discussion, and Rex Mortimer delivered the opening paper, a discussion of Wallerstein's contribution to dependency theory. Although it impressed Mortimer, the theory drew his criticism for its lack of room 'for the vitalizing force of human cultures and ideologies', in the words of John Legge, who later wrote of this paper that, 'even when at work at a rarified theoretical level', Rex never forgot 'he was dealing with individual human beings as well as with the collective human agony'.[46]

The conference was as much a gathering of friends as it was an academic enterprise in scholarly exchange. Rex, however, had been unwell before the conference and was able to attend only half the sessions because of severe back pain. Upon his return home, tests revealed that he had cancer of the lung and spine, and the prognosis was not good. As Herb farewelled Rex from the conference he passed his friend a poem. Poetry was not a genre that Herb had used before, even in his personal notes and diaries. Its theme, Rex later reflected, seemed to reveal that Herb 'had some prophetic intimation of trouble for me'.[47]

> For you, Rex,
> Tillich said we should give God talk a rest
> and he was right
> Labels are more than useless, they distract.
> I believe in Blake and Illich
> And in Ben and Soe Hok Gie
> And you.
> Life is not just a space before death,
> It is love and sharing and suffering, holy
> anger and changing one's mind.
> Above all it is learning and shedding
> stupidities, kicking one's drugs.
> It is friendship, long letters and political
> struggle.[48]

Herb kept in close touch with his friend during the next few months with regular phone calls and letters. By November, however, the cancer had spread to Rex's brain. Herb wrote to Ivan Illich to seek his advice on how he should advise Rex about his treatment options and how best to be a friend to him during

the coming difficult weeks and months. The frank reply from Illich, who had four years earlier subjected Western medicine to unfavourable scrutiny in his book *Limits to Medicine*, on Rex's prognosis was not surprising, but his focus on the role of a friend was poignant for Herb:

> What you say about the doctors makes one thing clear: nothing they know how to do improves the survival rate; in other words – no radiation, drug or surgery has any probability of lengthening survival … From what you say I would encourage Rex to work on his paper. Eventually assist him in that task. Demand much from him to make this paper splendid. Stay close to him. After work – even if it is for only a few hours, I would feast with him – drink wine or smoke hash or play music …[49]

Herb followed Illich's advice to encourage Rex to work when he could. Indeed, they would meet again, for the last time, at another conference at ANU in late November.

Rex knew Herb perhaps better than any of his friends and colleagues; he was a kindred spirit, eternal critic and a role model in things ideological and theoretical. Correspondence between the two men over these difficult, final months in Rex's life reveals the depths of their friendship and their rare ability to articulate that friendship to each other. Some weeks after receiving it, Rex explained his response to the poem:

> I first read it on the plane to Sydney, and many times since have drawn comfort from it. Even the notion that 'life is not just a space before death' is something I have had to relearn the hard way. For that and many many other reasons I knew

that my first effort at long distance communication, and in some senses the first step on my fight back, had to be with you.

All for you,

Rex[50]

Rex's death in hospital on 31 December, after weeks of excruciating pain, brought relief for those close to him. As Rex's wife Mary later wrote in her book, *When Your Partner Dies*, along with the pain of his illness, the prospect 'that a proud, intelligent and controlled man could feel his mental capacity disintegrate' was for Rex intolerable. Rex had earlier determined that he would end his life when he chose. As Mary explains in her book, Rex 'greatly feared losing his dignity, indeed "losing his mind", so we talked about how his life could be ended when *he* chose, when he felt it could no longer give him enough of what he wanted from it'.[51] Whether Herb had discussed euthanasia with Rex is not known, but his own views were increasingly sympathetic to ending the pain and suffering. He had watched his mother in the last weeks of her illness and had said he would not wish her agony on anyone.

Herb immediately organised a memorial service for Rex in Melbourne to take place sometime after the Sydney ceremony, at which Mary Mortimer invited him to deliver one of two eulogies. Mary describes the support of Rex's oldest and closest friends at this time as essential and healing. Very quickly Herb also decided to take over the job of completing Rex's final publication, which was no doubt something they had discussed once Rex's diagnosis became clear. As he prepared Rex's *Stubborn Survivors* for posthumous publication, Herb and Betty attended healing sessions to help with their grief. As he explained to Rex's close friend Angus

McIntyre, 'Betty and I were in a healing group; healing or meditation or concern or prayer, and that helped a bit, but it was still a period of great anxiety. It is only more recently that I have been coming to terms with the post-relief phase …'[52]

The period immediately following Rex's death was one of intense activity and work for Herb. Significantly, with his co-editor Rod Tiffen they completed *Stubborn Survivors* with (for Herb) uncharacteristic punctuality and in a relatively short time, just six months after Rex's death; it was published in June 1980. The momentum of *Stubborn Survivors* and many of the themes Rex raised in it propelled Herb to the consideration of such issues as hyper-militarism and Australia's foreign relations with the Third World. In these pursuits Herb turned to a method he had long engaged: community building, bringing together like-minded, similarly concerned and focused people to commit to a task of active problem-solving. But the 1980s would be another difficult period for Herb, punctuated with some great highs and extreme lows. In many ways it was a time of searching for solutions, both internal and personal and external and global. Herb was looking for a way to heal the world and at the same time looking to heal himself.

Approaching peace

In international politics and the nuclear arms race of the superpowers, 1979 was a watershed year. For many, including Herb, it signalled the beginning of a new cold war of hyper-militarism in which the threat of nuclear war and catastrophe was just minutes away. With the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 and the election of Republican Ronald Reagan as President of the United States in October 1980 on a platform of strengthening the

US defence position, Herb felt that 'relations between the USA and the Soviet Union are tenser than they have been since 1962', and so the danger of nuclear war had grown 'markedly'.[53]

To deal with the heightened nuclear threat and the fall-out from conflicts in the former French colonies of Indochina, new theories about the Third World, anti-establishment and peace paradigms were gaining popularity in Western scholarship. As Herb wrote in several thought pieces and essays, he was at his most energised and saw the greatest potential and opportunity at times of severe crisis and danger. In early 1980 he outlined the grounds for his optimism in the face of such danger in an open letter to a 'group of friends' or fellow-travellers who had come together in Melbourne to form a peace studies collective:

> It is then a situation of unprecedented danger for the whole human species. It is possibly more dangerous than the situation at the time of the Cuba Missiles Crisis of 1962 because so many more states are now heavily militarised. But new dangers are also new opportunities. As I see it we are now moving into a period, probably of some years, when it will be possible for opponents of the military madness to come to work together on an unprecedentedly broad front.[54]

Instigated by peace activist academics and students in Melbourne, including Herb's colleague and Pax Christi member Joseph Camilleri, and Quakers and atmospheric scientists Barrie Pittock and Dale Hess among others, the Victorian Association for Peace Studies (VAPS) was formed. Herb saw the group as grounded in their individual experiences of the Vietnam and anti-nuclear movements in the 1970s, involvement in peace groups like the Campaign for International Cooperation and Disarmament, as

Herb was in the 1970s,[55] and in religious social justice groups: 'All of us learned in the 1970s that living with integrity involves living in protest and living in openness to change. As I see it, we have all been affirming organizational principles which point to a way out of the general crisis of late capitalist, late industrial, late statist society.'[56]

The conveners of VAPS envisaged a group that did not exist simply as an academic round table speaking only to the converted. It was intended to have a public education role, disseminating information and engaging in debate on issues of disarmament, sustainability and peace more generally. In 1982 VAPS began publishing its quarterly Peace Dossier series, and later established an office in Flinders Lane, employing physicist St John Kettle as administrator. The publication of the Peace Dossiers arose from a desire to 'provide reliable information on the issues of war and peace in terms that the layperson could understand'.[57] Published from 1982 to 1992, the lengthy essays, written by some of the leading thinkers in their fields, presented rigorous research and debate on issues championed by the Australian peace movement and challenging established conceptual norms of international security. The first in the series was Desmond Ball's *American Bases in Australia*; other titles were *Nuclear War: The Threat to Australia* by A. Barrie Pittock (Peace Dossier no. 4), *Armed Neutrality – Australia's Alternative* by David Martin (no. 10) and *Peace Education in Schools* by Alan Rice (no. 18). The dossiers were sold to subscribers and at such events as the annual Palm Sunday Peace Rally.

Herb was energised by his commitment to this new group. Even the Labor Party's defeat in the October 1980 federal election, although disappointing, had not diminished this optimism for, as he explained to Ben Anderson in October 1980, he was now

seeing Australian politics from a new angle: 'I'm more engaged than in earlier years, partly because I've been very activistic [*sic*] over the last few months in an academics network that calls itself VAPS.'[58] His focus on building a peace studies network coincided with Herb finally winning a battle with the chairs of the Politics Department, Hugh Emy and David Kemp, to teach a course called 'Peace: Theories, Strategies and Movements', commencing in 1983. The course outline explained the link between his teaching, research and activist interests:

> The aggravation of Cold War tensions since 1979, the accelerating militarisation and nuclearisation of the Third World and the rise of powerful peace movements in many countries, have given a new vigour to peace thinking. The course's point of departure is a conviction that spiralling militarisation threatens the survival of the human species, and a related conviction that strategies for its supersession exist and deserve systematic discussion.[59]

Herb's peace studies focus augmented his political economy approach in his teaching and writing on international relations. Because his primary interest at this time was militarisation, Herb was engrossed in material that made heavy reference to statistics and economic data. In the optimistic essays he wrote at this time about the possibilities for world peace emerging from a state of crisis, Herb champions, above all, the role of supranational institutions, in particular the United Nations. He argued for the role of peace-making in 'building a meaningful structure of human community and planetary citizenship to support the supra-national institutions'.[60] His critics, although they saw such analysis as worthwhile to a certain extent, also viewed his

work utopian and naïve and somewhat at odds with the bipolar and highly militarised international system that dominated the decade.

A global search

Herb took six months of sabbatical leave for the first half of 1981, commencing his travels in early December 1980 to attend a conference on Asian Peace Research in the Global Context in Yokohama, convened by his friend Yoshikazu Sakamoto, then Secretary-General of the International Peace Research Association (IPRA). At the conference, he was reunited with Ivan Illich and other friends from his growing network of peace studies people, including some Indonesians. At the close of the conference the Asian Peace Research Association was established.

The following week Herb and Ivan stayed on with other delegates to attend an urgently convened conference hosted in Tokyo by the Japanese Catholic Council for Justice and Peace and the National Christian Council in Japan called 'Emergency International Conference to save Kim Dae-Jung's life'. The emergency conference followed the decision a few weeks earlier by a military court in South Korea that found the pro-democracy leader and eventual Nobel Peace Prize winner, Kim Dae–Jung, guilty of treason and sentenced him to death. The two-day conference attracted international media attention and representations from the Japanese Government. Herb wrote of the excitement generated by the gathering and his small role in it: 'I had to do quite a bit of speech-making myself over these two days and found that I was doing it with great conviction – linking the issue of this one man's life with the wider issue of militarism versus norms of world order.'[61] For Herb and others at the conference, this was an issue

that went beyond the mistrial and persecution of one politician and democracy activist:

> Over the last decades it has become all too clear that global rules and norms are needed if states with fantastically powerful military machines are not to destroy each other. And some such rules, conventions and norms have come to have some building power. I am thinking of ideas of Human Rights, Legality and also of Justice and Peace and Ecological Balance … If KDJ is executed that will not only be a terrible blow to justice and democracy in Korea. It will equally be a blow as the hopes of all of us that our children and grandchildren will be able to live life on this planet.[62]

In Yokohama, Herb shared a room with Ivan Illich, and in Tokyo they were in adjacent ones. It was the closest they had been since Ivan's visit to Melbourne in 1978 and Herb found the proximity to his guru both exhilarating and exhausting. As he explained to his family, it was 'quite a load emotionally, as well as intellectually'.[63] In a diary of the trip, Herb carefully noted not only the meetings and discussions he had throughout his visit but also his mood, which ranged from very low and tired to full of 'new energy'. His proximity to Ivan and his high energy and constant emotional and intellectual demands, although providing Herb with a sense of privilege of sorts, at times also left him feeling inadequate and unable to keep up. Herb described feeling that he was low on the list of people whom others wanted to speak to and that he was being overlooked for comment. He was also overwhelmed by the sophistication and frenetic pace of the city of Tokyo. He described all this as feeling 'disorganised' and 'disoriented' as he worked to process the often tragic and disappointing stories he

was hearing in discussions with conference delegates from developing nations. Although this was a professional world into which Herb was desperately trying to fit, his feelings of inadequacy when among peace people were not new and continued to stand in stark contrast to the comfortable and prestigious position he occupied in Indonesia when among 'Indonesia' people.

Herb went straight from the Japan conferences to Indonesia for a month, where he spent Christmas with his adopted family in Kamal and a lot of his time talking to students and intellectuals, mostly from his new circle of informants and colleagues, including those associated with LP3ES about peace studies ideas. Herb's article 'Repressive developmentalist regimes', first presented at the 1979 IPRA conference in New York, had just been published in the December 1980 edition of *Prisma* and was attracting much interest in these circles. *Prisma* editor Dawam Rahardjo described the article and Herb's decision to publish it in Indonesia as a lightning rod for further debate and a boost to the confidence of the LP3ES intellectual community.[64] With his LP3ES friends, Herb shared a passion for dependency theory as a counter to the New Order's modernisation program.[65] He was met with great enthusiasm and debate. Herb described this visit as giving him a considerable high, because he felt he had something useful to say to his Indonesian friends about the unfolding international situation and his introduction of peace studies ideas. That is not to say that everyone agreed with Herb's emphases; indeed, some in Indonesia felt Herb's ideas were pie in the sky, as the oppression of the New Order persisted. Herb's attempts to raise concerns about East Timor and West Papua generally met with a similar response; these struggles must be seen within the wider context of the suffering of many different groups in Indonesia at the hands of the state.

Herb's return to Melbourne in late January 1981 was brief. He had decided to spend several months travelling to a number of places, some new to him, so that he could learn about the peace movement in other countries, having at the back of his mind the idea of establishing a national peace institute in Australia. As he told fellow Indonesianist and Cornell alumnus Rudolph Mrazek some months earlier, 'In this last year I have become more involved than ever before with issues to do with militarism (or the hyper-militarism which Edward Thompson calls exterminism …) and what I'd love to do is think about ways of looking at Australia's relations with its Third World neighbours …'[66]

From the outset, the trip, plans for which were largely uncertain until the last minute, was one of very wide inquiry and observation with open questions and aims about which he was constantly unsure. He was particularly keen to visit the USSR but did not have plans to do so when he left Melbourne. He wrote to his family from London mid-way through his journey of his doubts about his travels:

> There were various points … when I wondered whether this whole trip isn't a mistake. The project is such a vast one and the amount of time I have in each place so short. There is a sort of built-in superficiality in the whole thing. And it is demanding in terms of nervous energy, just trying to plan a new set of complicated arrangements in each city, making choices between seeing old friends and making contact with new people and new organizations and so on.[67]

A few days later, however, he was less uncertain about his objectives, writing, 'I'm confirmed in my sense that the general subject I'm exploring, of how the Third World is responding or

hesitating to respond to the new situation in the superpower race, is enormously important.'[68]

The launching pad for this world tour was the WOMP conference in New York. From there he travelled to Europe, stopping in on friends and old contacts in London and Amsterdam while trying to find a way to visit Moscow and Prague. After much correspondence, making connections with friends both in Australia and America, Herb made contact with colleagues behind the Iron Curtain and set about organising documentation. In Prague he spent time with Rudolph Mrazek, and in Moscow he was for five days the guest of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the USSR Academy of Sciences, hosted by Vsevolod (Seva) Arkhipov, an Indonesianist Herb had met when Arkhipov was at ANU in 1971. In an interview given after his return to Melbourne, Herb answered a question about the Soviet Union and how its people feel about their government's high level of military spending, along with his observations about the levels of poverty and inefficiency there. He observed,

> There is something anachronistic about a country so poor being a superpower … Perhaps there is an element of historical accident about the fact that the USSR emerged as the world's second most powerful nation at the end of the Second World War. Maintaining that status has certainly imposed severe limits on what can be done to raise standards of living.[69]

During his stay Herb became very fond of Arkhipov, his wife Marina and their daughter. He later described this friendship as important for being 'almost the only friends … I have on the other side of the fracture'.[70] He grew concerned for Marina and her daughter who both had diabetes and suffered from an eye

condition caused by the disease. In Australia their doctor had prescribed a special type of insulin for this condition, which it was impossible to find in Moscow. When he returned to Melbourne, Herb contacted their doctor in Sydney, who sent a batch of the insulin. Unable to find a trusted courier to deliver it to the Arkhipovs, Herb sent it off to the Australian Ambassador in Moscow with a covering letter imploring him to arrange for its delivery as a matter of 'urgent humanitarian responsibilit[y]'.[71]

From Moscow, Herb moved on to Delhi and Calcutta where he met another WOMP leader Rajni Kothari, then to Bangkok, where he became ill. Upon returning to Melbourne he took some time to recover. In spite of its logistical difficulties, the trip and the people Herb met, particularly those from WOMP, buoyed his commitment to a global and peace studies approach. The downside of this was that, as he wrote to Dawam Rahardjo in October, 'I've been awfully far from Indonesian developments in the last few months.'[72]

At home in Melbourne in January 1982, Herb was continuing to process the information and experiences he had gathered during his period of sabbatical leave. As he wrote to Johan Galtung, 'my central intellectual preoccupation remains the potential of various groups in Third World countries as contributors to global peace making …'.[73] One such experience included Herb's close involvement with the organising and running of a UNESCO conference on the 'New Peace Movement in the Third World' held in Jakarta in late August 1982. Herb gave a keynote address and was consulted by its convenors on whom to invite and which themes to include in the program. In 'A dialogue between fear and hope', his contribution to *Confronting the Nuclear Age* published that year, he drew from his personal experience of living in the Third World and concluded that grounds for optimism about world

peace were largely to be found in non-Western countries: 'There seems to be a lot less cynicism and despair there than in the industrialised world. People's assumptions about the future aren't burdened there as they so often are here by a sense that all the great achievements of human culture are the ones of the past.'[74]

Inevitably, Herb's thinking turned again to Indonesia and its relationship to this broad project he had embarked on over a year earlier, 'Global peace politics and the Third World'. However, as he had already begun to discover on his recent visits to Indonesia and elsewhere, the preoccupations of many living in the Third World, including the most outward-looking and progressive Indonesians, were matters far more immediate and life-threatening than nuclear proliferation and militarism. As he wrote a year later, 'It is a reality, however, that many politically conscious people in Third World countries see the new nuclear disarmament movements as remote from their concerns. Does this not reflect the fact that poverty is the central issue in those countries, overshadowing all others?'[75] But, as his 1982 Christmas letter to his *desa* family demonstrates, Herb remained sure of the nuclear threat and its closeness to and importance for all peoples, not just intellectuals in Western cities:

> This New Year we are thinking a lot about the danger of war again. It is such a terrifying danger if you think of the possibility that nuclear weapons could be used, which have the power to destroy and annihilate. Our prayers for the year ahead are for peace, so that humanity will progress towards solving conflict without war. So that America and Russia live peacefully. So that the whole of humanity will live peacefully. External or worldly peace comes from inner or spiritual peace. Isn't that right, Pak Kromo? This agrees with old Javanese tradition, no?[76]

A focus on East Timor

> … peace is not an abstract condition, but a very specific spirit to be relished in its particular, incommunicable uniqueness by each community.
>
> Ivan Illich, 'The cultivation of conspiracy'.

In response to lobbying from various groups within Australia and a proposal in November 1981 from Senator John Button, then Senate Opposition Leader, the Coalition government instructed the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence to inquire into events in East Timor since 1974. The situation of the people of East Timor had become increasingly desperate as the prolonged conflict had a profound impact on the economy, which was mostly based on agriculture, resulting in widespread famine in 1978–79. The inquiry into the 'Human Rights and Conditions of the People of East Timor' had bipartisan support in the Senate, with senators intending that the investigation should concern itself with East Timor's present situation and not with the rights and wrongs of the past. However, the committee soon discovered it would be impossible to conduct the inquiry without understanding East Timor's recent history and included analysis of the period before and after Indonesia annexed the territory in its final report. The committee's work was made difficult by a lack of funds either for members to travel to East Timor to collect evidence or for bringing witnesses to Australia to give evidence. Moreover, the obstruction of the Indonesian Government, which refused either to participate in the inquiry or to allow committee members into East Timor (even at their own expense), proved a considerable impediment. The conflict in the Australian Government's position was evident in its denial in 1982 of a visa to Jose Ramos Horta, which deprived the committee of

the opportunity of hearing testimony from the senior Fretilin leader.[77]

The committee's final report was not unanimously supported by all members of the Senate Standing Committee, three of whom presented a dissenting report for several reasons, but particularly because the committee had relied 'on accounts of refugees from an unfortunate colonial experience, a violent civil war and a consequent invasion which occurred eight years ago' rather than on verifiable information. They argued that, given the importance of Australia's relationship with its large neighbour, it was 'irresponsible and therefore detrimental to the national interest to table a report which is critical of Indonesia's conduct when that criticism is based on uncertain or unsupportable grounds'.[78] Given the limitations of the committee's investigation, its sources necessarily included those who had fled East Timor since 1974 and journalists and others who had visited the province since Indonesia's annexation, as well as academics and activists.

Among Herb's extensive archive of clippings, notes and papers related to East Timor, a consistent theme dominates the jottings made on notes and memos filed together in a folder simply marked 'Writing Plans, 1981–82'. The handwritten and undated notes about possible essays and articles include repeated references to something along the lines, as he puts it, of dealing with

> … the need for a *mea culpa* piece which says that people like me are guilty too, not only Whitlam
>
> 1. Because we didn't raise the moral and practical arguments for mini-states
>
> 2. Because we didn't argue the Realpolitik case re danger to Australia – Indonesia relations if Indonesia got itself into a Vietnam

and

East Timor – My Guilt and Ours

The recent reports by Peter Rogers of the Sydney Morning Herald has confirmed what the Australian Council for Overseas Aid has been saying for many months that starvation conditions in ET are extreme.[79]

Since Indonesia's bloody invasion and annexation of East Timor in 1975, several Melbourne-based groups and individuals had continued to campaign actively for East Timor's right to self-determination and to draw attention to the tyrannical rule of the occupying Indonesian forces. Many of them were Herb's close friends and colleagues. In America Ben Anderson had testified before the US Congress in 1976 and again in 1980. Until the time of the Senate inquiry, however, Herb had neither written nor made any significant public statements about East Timor other than a letter he wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 1975. He had directed his support instead to the work of his friends, including Pat Walsh and John Waddingham, David Scott and former students Helen Hill, Richard Tanter, Sue Roff and Carmel Budiardjo and her Tapol team in London.

However, the launch of the Senate inquiry stirred Herb to pull together his notes and write a piece that reflects not only on the Australia–Indonesia relationship and the situation in East Timor but also on his own activism, or lack of it, in decrying Australia's complicity in the suffering of its people. Despite its long period of germination, he did not send it until after the official deadline for submissions to the Senate inquiry had passed.[80] He implored the committee to excuse its lateness, which they did.

Herb's submission is described by long-time colleague and East Timor activist John Waddingham as 'soft but impactful'.

It was a contribution by a leading Indonesia academic when others were noticeable by their absence. Herb's submission is a representation of the complexity and nuance with which he understood and approached this subject, as a humanitarian, an Australian scholar of Indonesia and close friend of Indonesia. As Waddingham further explained, Herb's position on East Timor was such that 'He was always trying to find a way whereby Timorese aspirations and Indonesian needs could somehow or another be accommodated'.[81]

Herb's submission presents analysis of the thinking of Indonesia's nationalist and oppositionist elite on East Timor at the time. Informed by his visits to Indonesia in late 1980 to early 1981 and in mid-1982, during which he met many leaders from oppositionist or dissident groups, Herb admits that, while most of them were not supporters of the Fretilin cause, they 'see the decision to invade East Timor as a mistake or a misconceived adventure', typifying what is wrong with the Suharto government. Indeed, for some time now, he had found it difficult to find an audience in Indonesia that was receptive to his concerns about East Timor. In a theme that he returned to more in the years ahead, Herb dismissed the argument that small states are not viable because they cannot sustain economic autonomy, and countered that argument by saying that 'it is virtually impossible for any state to achieve that in today's world of fast growing interdependence'. Herb's final shot was aimed at Australia's policy-makers on East Timor and at Indonesia watchers close to the government, including diplomats, academics and journalists:

> In using the term 'lobby' for the group I do not mean to imply crude or simply material interest. The group is held together by a common outlook and ethos rather than material interests.

> Its members' outlook is a coherent one. Most of them have genuine affection for Indonesia and its people … I am not concerned to denigrate the members of this group. Some of them are my friends. But I believe they are insensitive to some crucial aspects of contemporary Indonesian reality.[82]

The importance Herb placed on being close to the 'contemporary Indonesian reality' was demonstrated by the frequency of his visits there in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As Jamie Mackie had reminded him in 1977, the visits armed Herb with the 'Indonesian reality' necessary to provide commentary about the sentiments of those in Indonesia opposing the ruling regime. But a year had elapsed between his last visit to Indonesia and the date of his submission to the Senate Committee. In September 1982 he had attended the UNESCO Regional Training Seminar for University Teachers in the Field of Disarmament in Jakarta and had returned earlier than planned because of illness. A return trip planned for later in 1983 was also cancelled as Herb sought further treatment for a severe depressive illness, and his inability to travel to Indonesia weighed heavily on him.

Herb battled depression and illness throughout 1983, although in early October he reported to his son David and his partner Karen, then living in India, that regular doses of multivitamins were helping. Teaching the inaugural semester of his course 'Peace: Theories, Strategies and Movements' also provided a great deal of satisfaction, and he was working on the idea of establishing an interdisciplinary centre for peace studies. The death in October 1983 of another of his closest friends and intellectual sparring partners, David Penny, was a deep blow. As it had been with the death of Rex Mortimer, the time between discovering his friend was ill with cancer and his death was tragically short.

Following his high period after the publication of *Stubborn Survivors* and setting up VAPS in 1980 and his success establishing his peace studies course at Monash, Herb had again entered a period of low productivity and depression. He began to visit a psychologist regularly to help him deal with his renewed bouts of depression, which became especially concerning after he was forced to cancel his planned trip to Indonesia. He began treatment at a respite centre in Warburton, northeast of Melbourne. Although there were still some high periods, he found it increasingly difficult to focus on work of any kind, teaching or research, and relied heavily on his tutors and senior research students to fill in for him when he was unable to attend lectures.

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Herb took six months study leave for the first half of 1984. After an absence of almost eighteen months – a long time for him in the early 1980s – he spent from February to April in Indonesia. Although there is no clear indication that he was working on any specific project, he described the trip as 'enjoyable and fruitful'.[83] In a short essay written after the trip, Herb explains that the principal topic of his conversations with 'journalists, staff and students at universities, people active in non-government organisations and religious groups, and officials in government departments and institutes' was still the nuclear arms race and peace, adding, 'I directed as many bus and roadside stall conversations as I could to the issues of world peace'.[84] Although Herb delighted in the people he encountered who shared his belief in the importance of global peace issues for Indonesia, he admitted that the majority of people he spoke to questioned the relevance of this politics, arising as it did in the West, to their situation. He

persevered with this theme, even though by his own admission, it was a very difficult message to sell.

Herb's research and teaching preoccupations were on the surface almost wholly tied up in peace studies, whose organisations' conferences he attended around the world and into which he poured his activist energies. He was one of the drivers of the establishment of a Peace Research Centre based at ANU and a member of its interim advisory board in 1984–85.[85] In early 1985, taking more leave, this time for long service, Herb travelled to Europe to research its centres for peace studies and research. He stayed with Carmel Budiardjo in London, visited his oldest friend Jim Lawler in Paris, and attended the Committee for Just World Peace conference in Portugal, the highlight of his trip, where he met for the first time Quaker and peace studies scholar Elise Boulding.

Nonetheless, Indonesia remained his priority. In a letter to Ken Ward in May 1984, Herb explained how, after his trip to Europe, he was 'groping my way to a new way of looking at "Indonesia things"'.[86] As was his general approach and view on peace issues, the tone of his letter was upbeat and hopeful about the search for new solutions, especially to the problems of East Timor and West Papua, and centred around vague ideas about the role of third parties in dispute resolution and rethinking sovereignty issues. A refugee crisis in April, while he was in Indonesia, when an estimated 9000 to 10 000 West Papuans flooded over the border into Papua New Guinea following the murder of Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) leader Arnold Ap and the deaths of more than fifty refugees in the border camps, presented Herb with the crisis incentive that had so often led him to new thinking and work. In a collection of thoughts on West Papua he wrote down in late August, Herb saw some hope and a new phase

in the politics of this issue: 'A Pandora's box has been opened, a problem elevated to a new salience'.[87] The search for a 'new way' to analyse and find elusive solutions to the problems in these restive provinces by way of crisis and bloodshed was once again, Herb believed, opened up.

The only piece of writing of any considerable length and polish he completed during 1983–85 was a paper Herb presented to the Conference on Australia and Non-Alignment in Melbourne on 3 June 1984 in which he focused on East Timor and West Papua and argued the need to consider alternative solutions to these conflicts,

> As I see it, it would take a great shaking of the whole of the international system for East Timor to be able to get full independence and it would take an even greater shaking of the system for West Papua to become an independent state. So it is worth thinking about whether something less than full independence is achievable in those two places, something that brings an end to the present vicious circles of repression and resistance.[88]

Herb's conversations in Indonesia with his friends from opposition and intellectual circles in the late 1970s and early 1980s had reinforced his position *vis-à-vis* seeing these struggles as part of an Indonesia-wide miscellany of human rights issues,

> It is understandable enough that the Australian peace movement should sympathise with the OPM and its project for an independent West Papua. But I think the movement should also sympathise with opposition groups in Indonesia as a whole, groups which see grievances of the … West Papuans

> and those of the East Timorese as part of a wider struggle against oppressive rule …[89]

By focusing on these issues he was able to bring together his unique combination of expertise and knowledge of Indonesia and peace studies. This paper was largely a personal mission statement and the beginning of his long preoccupation with finding solutions to the Timor and West Papua 'problems'.

> I want to argue that it is the job of academics with the luxury of being able to play with ideas in such areas to think up new approaches and analogies to make it possible for the vicious circles of rebellion and repression … to be reversed. Not that I've got any solutions to offer. But I think I know what direction I think the search for more solutions should take, basically the direction of looking for third parties on the one hand and ways of fudging sovereignty issues on the other …[90]

Herb sent the paper to some of his Indonesianist colleagues, several of whom responded by making similar comments about its optimistic rendering of the possibilities for action on the East Timor issue. Ben Anderson thanked him for providing 'nourishing food for thought' but disagreed with him entirely: 'I see no reason why Suharto should do all or any of the things you outline, not least because he would be doing something there he isn't doing anywhere else in Indonesia.'[91]

Herb was invited to present a keynote speech at the fifth Asian Studies Association of Australia (ASAA) conference in Adelaide in May 1984 on the topic 'How Asia changed me'. His fairly regular sessions with a psychologist at this time meant that he had already given some thought to questions of influence and his life's journey

thus far. In addressing the conference theme, Herb concluded,

> Being an Indonesia person has been a very central part of my identity all of my life, but I found myself up against some puzzling things as I tried to work out what impact Indonesia's really had on me and I think I've come close to admitting to myself that it's been basically a fairly superficial impact, because I think I'm basically very much the same kind of person now as I was in my late teens.[92]

The years 1984–86 were marked once more by periods of illness and depression, and Herb's productivity suffered greatly. Travelling home from Europe in 1985 through Indonesia, he was again forced to cut short his stay. He was unable to concentrate due to what he described as periods of 'malaise' and 'of that protracted lassitude'[93]. On his return doctors diagnosed 'malabsorption' and put Herb on a regime of vitamins and other supplements, and he made adjustments to reduce his stress levels.[94] He published nothing from these two six-month periods of leave. A fairly good number of students enrolled in his peace studies course, but a proportion of these did so because it was seen to be an easy ride, with soft assessment requirements and light reading load.

Emerging from this difficult period, there were moments of renewed hope following the people's overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines in February 1986, and Herb maintained a close interest in the unfolding situation in West Papua. With colleagues Ian Bell and Ron Hatley, he contributed an article progressing his ideas on the possible solutions to Indonesia's secessionist conflicts to the University of California journal *Asian Survey*.[95]

Social justice and the wider world

> How should we think about the search for global justice? I see it as a search for new ways of organising human affairs, both within societies and between them, new ways which will do away with hunger and many forms of disease and bring about a radical reduction in levels of exploitation and oppression.
>
> Herb Feith, 'Social justice and the larger world'.[96]

On holiday in New Zealand in December 1986 with Betty and his father, who was receiving thermal treatment at Rotorua after recently suffering two strokes,[97] Herb buried himself in his reading and drafting an essay on East Timor, working along the same lines as the article about West Papua he had written with Ian Bell and Ron Hatley. When he returned to Melbourne he circulated the resulting 'letter', 'East Timor: Is a settlement possible?', among his colleagues. The thought piece was a further development of the ideas he first laid out in the paper he had given at the Australia and Non-Alignment Conference two years earlier. Importantly, it marked his search for a settlement in East Timor as a major preoccupation.

Herb outlined three possible models for a settlement of the East Timor conflict and suggested why such a breakthrough might be possible at that time. Bringing together a sketchy and rather unsubstantiated set of arguments, he proposed that domestic and international conditions at the time – financial imperatives, a new generation of military leadership, Indonesia's international ambitions, and the passing of time since the breakdown of previous ceasefire talks – supported the possibility. The three models he outlined were (a) that Fretilin give up its struggle, (b) that a

Fretilin administration emerge with Indonesian support, and (c) that the UN supervise an act of self-determination – 'something very different from the 1969 Act of Free Choice in West Irian'. Each of the models, by his own admission, was unlikely. The purpose of the 'letter', he wrote, was rather to encourage thinking and action, by his peers and internationally:

> … it seems clear to me that the Timor war has had less international attention in the last 3–4 years than it deserves and needs. The international community has an obvious responsibility to facilitate whatever can be done to wind down that vicious war. The responsibility is all the greater for citizens of countries like Australia and America, whose governments made major contributions to the genesis of the 11 years of tragic and wholly unnecessary bloodshed.[98]

The letter was a call to his colleagues, 'people with knowledge of the area', to ask questions of their politicians and diplomats about East Timor. In many ways it read like another personal mission statement. Herb returned home from New Zealand for a brief stay before leaving for Indonesia, where he continued to question his friends and informants, including Abdurrahman Wahid, Onghokham, Arief Budiman and Agus Simatupang, about East Timor. From Carmel Budiardjo, who continued to highlight the plight of the people of East Timor in the journal *Tapol* when mainstream news media and Western governments were silent, there were encouraging words for Herb's preliminary proposals in the 'letter'. She was particularly encouraging of the activist role he himself might take on, a role not unlike the one he took in writing his submission to the Senate Standing Committee in 1983 and the one Ben Anderson took in his submission to the

Fourth Committee of the UN General Assembly in August 1986. Carmel encouraged him to go further: 'What about it if you took the initiative for a move by academics in Australia, the US and Holland to speak out on ET?'[99]

'Imagining' peace

In June 1987 Herb read an extract in *The Age* from a new book, *Einstein's Monsters* by British author Martin Amis. He was so impressed by it that he wrote to Amis telling him that he was 'deeply moved' by the piece and planned to include the book in his peace studies course.[100] For many years now, Herb had been on a quest to find balance between the prescient fear of thinking about possibilities of nuclear war and his propensity for optimism. Herb no doubt connected with Amis's unshakeable sense of impending doom and horror of nuclear war that pervades his nightmares, which he describes in *Einstein's Monsters*:

> Each time I hear a sudden whining in the air or one of the more atrocious impacts of city life, or play host to a certain kind of unwelcome thought, I can't help wondering how it might be. Suppose I survive. Suppose my eyes aren't pouring down my face, suppose I am untouched by the hurricane of secondary missiles that all mortar, metal and glass has abruptly become … I shall be obliged … to retrace that long mile home, through the firestorm, the remains of the thousand-mile-an-hour-winds, the warped atoms, the groveling dead. Then – God willing, if I have the strength, and, of course if they are alive – I must find my wife and children and I must kill them.
>
> What am I to do with thoughts like these? What is anyone to do with thoughts like these?[101]

The potentially paralysing effect of 'thinking the unthinkable' was something Herb had been actively working against for some time. In following the political models for hope in (post)nuclear world of Galtung and Falk, Herb became increasingly interested in the more personal and spiritual method of 'future-imaging', particularly in the work of the Quaker, Elise Boulding, whom he had met in 1985.[102] Herb attended her workshop at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in May 1987 and derived much stimulus from it. Visits to Melbourne by Buddhist and peace studies scholar Joanna Macy in 1985 and 1986 to run workshops on Buddhist approaches to social action also influenced Herb. As he explained to his friend and former student Ichlasul Amal, now home in Yogyakarta teaching at UGM, Boulding's approach was 'to get people to imagine a world without weapons in 2017!':

> It was a whole weekend workshop and I found it marvellously stimulating. The theoretical foundations of the method have to do with the need to get both the right hemisphere of the brain (the fantasying, dreaming, seeing things whole part) and the left hemisphere (the intellectual, analytical, disciplined part) working in cooperation with each other.[103]

It was the work of Joanna Macy, in particular, that Herb recommended to Martin Amis in response to his lament that so many of the world's senior writers had remained silent on nuclear weapons; he included a copy of Macy's essay 'Despair Work' with his letter.

Herb began to use the methods of Macy and Boulding in his own undergraduate classes, where his students embraced them with great enthusiasm. Boulding and Macy gave practical examples of how the intellectual and the spiritual can be engaged in peace studies, which Herb found to be particularly sustaining, personally

and in his teaching. He was also very interested in testing how future workshops and scenario planning might work in Indonesia. His colleague in the Politics Department, and the inheritor of Herb's 'Rich World Poor World' course when he stopped teaching it in the late 1980s, Francis Loh, described observing Herb's classes at this time, finding him to be an inspiring teacher whose methods 'sought to relate teaching-learning to the outside world on the one hand, and to break down the "banking" notion of education … on the other'. For Loh, Herb's involvement of the students in a way of learning through questioning was revelatory, observing, 'There was some magic to all this as Herb engaged his students'.[104]

Family and generation

When the house next door to Herb and Betty in Kyarra Road came up for sale in 1983, Arthur was almost 90. It was increasingly inevitable that it would soon be too difficult for him to live alone in his large house on Alma Road. With the encouragement of Herb and Betty, Arthur bought the house but did not move into it until 1986. Although this house was also too large for his needs, Arthur was keen to guard his independence, and everyone hoped this would be a good and workable compromise for them all. Around this time Herb regularly took his father with him to meetings at the Australian Institute for International Affairs (AIIA). Although this was not entirely Herb's thing, he became an AIIA member in order to be able to take Arthur along. At 91, Arthur increasingly needed assistance and care as he became frailer. For Herb and Betty, honouring Arthur's wishes to avoid an aged-care facility and remain in his own home entailed a great deal of physical work and made demands on their time. They were

assisted by visits from home-care nurses and friends, including St John Kettle and Lance Castles, who boarded in the 'Nuthouse' (a bungalow in the garden at Kyarra Road) at separate times over the coming years, and helped care for Arthur.

The late 1980s continued to be difficult. This period of Herb's depression, which he dated as commencing around 1980, featured a pattern of highs and lows that dominated his work and family life. Several different psychologists provided counselling through these years, and he also had remarkable insight into his own condition. As a young man in his late teens and early twenties, Herb had read psychology books in an effort 'to understand himself'.[105] His friend and sometimes doctor and therapist, David Mitchell, remarked on Herb's capacity for deep self-analysis. During these rollercoaster years, Herb would often put his thoughts on paper, mostly in the form of lists with headings like 'Why did it all feel so bad this morning?' and 'Positive things', and he sometimes kept a simple diary of how he felt each day 'Recalling this last week – the high day, low day pattern'.

At the beginning of 1988 Herb was in a particularly deep low. He had had a relatively productive trip to Indonesia in 1987 in which he had focused on his Indonesian intellectuals project, although this trip was also not without the now 'normal' low periods and anxieties. This trip was the first in some years to have a distinct research focus: the study of Indonesia's new political thinkers, which was a sort of sequel to the collection he and Lance Castles had put together in 1970, *Indonesian Political Thinking, 1945–1965*. Dan Lev had suggested this project when he was visiting in mid-1986, and Herb had subsequently been strongly encouraged by George Kahin to pursue it. George and Dan both saw it as a way to bring Herb back to working to his great strengths, telling him:

> … best of all, we're both so very pleased that in addition to your global interest in alternative development you are starting along the road to Indonesian research again. In that area, Herb, you are *badly* needed! There are so *very* few outsiders who have the sensitivity joined with the knowledge to provide the insights needed. Indeed, I never knew anyone who outstripped you in that respect.[106]

But the field research did not come easily. On this and his other trips to Indonesia in the 1980s, his friends recall Herb's necessary 'power naps' under their desks and on their floors, and his friend and a doctor, Marsillam Simanjuntak, recalls requests to administer high doses of vitamins intravenously. In this way Herb managed his physical and mental limitations and, on the whole, his meetings and interviews with many younger intellectuals (*suara-suara baru*), such as Taufik Rahzen, Ariel Heryanto and Vedi Hadiz, and with older ones, including Romo Mangunwijaya, Onghokham and Taufik Rahman, were productive and energising.

However, towards the end of 1987 gloom descended again, and Herb faced renewed anxieties about his work, his future and caring for his father. In the midst of this personal anxiety, in February 1988, Betty's youngest brother Derek, a Uniting Church minister, committed suicide after a long period of severe depression. The family, his congregation and the wider church community were shocked and devastated. Derek's death left his family with many unanswered questions. For Herb there were questions about what he could have done, the calls and conversations he could have had with Derek, the problems he might have helped him solve. After the death of his father, Derek, who was just a young boy in the early days of Herb's courting of Betty, had

looked to Herb as a big brother, and they had cared about each other greatly. Betty's mother Ina, now in her eighties, and Derek's wife and children now became the Feiths' primary concern as they sought to deal with their own grief and loss.

Herb was struggling with his own depression as well, and his mind wandered inevitably to the similarities between him and his brother-in-law and to fears about what that could mean. Although she did not speak of it to Herb until some time later, Betty too for a while feared seeing a comparable pattern in his behaviour. Fighting his depression and mindful of the importance of getting on with work as a means to force this low state aside, Herb was determined to go ahead with a planned Indonesia trip, which he had delayed for a month until April. With Betty busy attending not only to Arthur but also to her grieving mother, it could not have been a decision that Herb or Betty made easily. Lance Castles' residence in the Nuthouse at Kyarra Road made Herb's absence in April and May possible. Later in the year, Arthur's health quickly deteriorated, and he died on 10 December 1988.

A few months earlier, Alan Smith had invited Herb and Betty to buy his share in a small farmlet at Mia Mia, between Kyneton and Heathcote, a couple of hours' drive to Melbourne's north. Alan and another of its owners, Peter Britton, also a former student of Herb's, and their partners were looking to sell their shares, with Ron Hatley retaining his. The Feith family decided it was a good opportunity for them all, especially Herb, to escape the city for respite and, with Arthur, the family decided they would use his money to buy the share in Mia Mia and therefore own equal shares.

After Arthur's death in December, Herb and Betty took a couple of much-needed weeks resting at Mia Mia, and did so more frequently in the coming years. The next twelve months,

however, were no less full of family responsibility and personal turmoil as he and Betty continued to deal with their grief at losing Derek and Arthur. In February 1989, twelve months after her brother's death, Betty's mother suffered a stroke. After months of hospitalisation and rehabilitation, Betty and Herb, supported by Betty's brother and sister, brought Ina home to live with them. Herb again took leave of absence from Monash for the first six months of 1989.

Buoyed by hope

Herb began this leave of absence in early 1989 with concrete expectations, and the focus of his many discussions with people in Indonesia since the mid-1970s remained his focus at the end of the 1980s: 'The two main ideas I want to talk to people about are democracy and "alternative development", and my focus is on people at the edges of the government complex.'[107]

The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was a moment of personal elation and further convinced him of the importance of these two agendas for the Indonesian people, albeit with a decidedly more optimistic outlook. More than ever, his commitment also to the search for peaceful solutions in West Papua and East Timor was bolstered, although, in real terms in Indonesia, many considered that his optimism was unjustified. In late 1989 Herb drafted an 'open letter' containing his latest proposal for dealing with self-determination claims in East Timor, which he planned to send to a major Australian newspaper. Before he did so, he hoped to get some feedback from Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and from his friend and former diplomat Soedjatmoko. Herb faxed his draft to his former student and friend Stuart Graham in Jakarta, asking him to pass it on to Soedjatmoko. Stuart's reaction to receiving it via fax in Jakarta revealed the extent to which such

speculation and projecting (future-imaging, perhaps) about East Timor was still highly dangerous: 'In Ati [his wife] and my interests, please *don't* send sensitive material by fax, and particularly not to the Hilton as it could easily be intercepted and abused.'[108] Nonetheless, Stuart did pass the letter on to Soedjatmoko for his comment. Herb wanted to know, particularly 'whether there is a danger that the publication of the piece could actually impede the process of change leading to some sort of settlement'. Three days later Stuart reported back, 'I saw Koko [Soedjatmoko] this morning and he asked me to pass to you his strong objections to the open letter – "a total non-starter"; "completely unacceptable for outside involvement"; "attitudes not subject to change in foreseeable future, irrespective of change of Pres"; Evans best advised NOT to try this approach.'[109]

Had Herb's optimism been misplaced? Had he failed to read the political winds correctly? What risks would he be taking if his ideas were made public? Two days after receiving Soedjatmoko's unequivocal dismissal of the ideas in his letter, on the fourteenth anniversary of the Indonesian invasion, Herb's piece appeared in Melbourne's *Age* on 7 December with the title 'The time is ripe for peace in East Timor'. His main argument, to which Soedjatmoko was so opposed, was the call for outside states and international organisations to play a role in winding down the war. Behind Herb's call was his belief that both sides were moving towards consideration of the idea of East Timor becoming a 'special territory'. Herb argued that the views of the Indonesian public about the province had changed following Pope John Paul II's visit to Indonesia and East Timor in October 1989: '… politically conscious Indonesians are now aware, as never before, that the nationalism of the East Timorese is a reality that will not go away.' He argued that the international situation supported a move

towards settlement in East Timor, quoting Jimmy Carter: 'a wind of change in favour of dialogue is now sweeping the world'. The position of the UN as a facilitator of reform was, Herb argued, 'optimistic as never before'. On Australia's role, Herb advised that Australia should use the leverage of the good relationship forged by Evans and Foreign Minister Ali Alatas to give strong support for a settlement and to provide an opportunity for 'imaginative brainstorming' on possible solutions. Herb's strongest words are left to the end: 'Above all, our officials should refrain from describing East Timor's situation in ways that deny the central reality that there is a war going on there.'

In the first semester of 1990 Herb took his third consecutive six-month period of leave. For Betty it was a loving and generous demonstration of support and sharing of the family responsibilities they bore so acutely during these years. For his department Chair and perhaps also some of his colleagues, it had become an untenable trend. David Kemp, co-Chair of the Politics Department, wrote Herb in late 1990 warning him that he would soon need to make a decision about his position in the department, as his extended absences were making it difficult to schedule classes and distribute teaching loads. For the preceding seven years Herb had taught both his first-year 'Rich World: Poor World' and third-year 'Peace' courses, but regular bouts of sickness meant that he had handed over his lectures to his tutors at the last moment, which had been noticed, as had the reputation of his undergraduate peace studies course as an easy option. Herb had been thinking about retirement for some time and to have his hand forced in this way would come as some sort of relief.

Although his leave was largely to assist Betty with his mother-in-law's care, Herb did not spend all of the six months at home. He went to Indonesia for six weeks from late February to early

April, a highlight of which was his visit to Batam to see his postgraduate student Dewi Fortuna Anwar, who had returned home to complete her thesis. Herb also met his son Rob, who was travelling in Indonesia. Herb used every opportunity he had when speaking with colleagues and students to raise the issue of East Timor, West Papua and peace generally, as he had done on other visits in the 1980s. Their reactions were no different from previous trips: a mixture of indifference and scepticism. In spite of this and of his Indonesianist colleagues' views about his long-established optimism about finding a solution to the East Timor 'problem', Herb maintained his focus on the issue. He was bolstered by the support and knowledge of his friends working closely on East Timor, especially Pat Walsh who was then editor of *Inside Indonesia*, a magazine begun in 1983 as a collaboration between Waddingham and Walsh on East Timor with to broaden Australians' understanding of Indonesia. His itinerary included his first visit to East Timor, and he saw it as an important next step in his research. But the trip to Dili never took place as Herb returned home earlier than expected, cutting his travels short again because of another bout of illness and general malaise.

This latest, and final, period of leave had many moments of happiness and satisfaction, but did little to improve his recurring bouts of quite debilitating anxiety and depression. On trips to Indonesia in the 1980s, Herb had got into the habit of keeping a simple diary in which he jotted down a few words each day to describe how he felt. The diary reveals a pattern of several good days followed by low periods, a pattern Herb was very aware of. He believed that meeting Rob in Indonesia in 1989, when they recorded some interviews in which Herb spoke about his childhood and time in Indonesia in the 1950s, was therapeutic: '… my realization that my health pattern of the last 4–5 days fits with

an explanation from what Dr Slamet Imam Santoso diagnosed in 1952, my body insisting on not allowing me to have too great an overdose of intense experience. A great relief to perceive that pattern.'[110] In June 1990 he revealed to his friend Hardoyo the extent of his treatment for his cycles of depression and his belief that it was having some effect: 'The latest is tests on my brain electrical functioning which seems to have come up with something. I am feeling in very good shape at the moment, but the pattern of cycles is pretty much as it was while I was in Indonesia, about two very good weeks, about two bad weeks and two in between, and then the six week cycle starts again.'[111]

Then, just as he predicted, six weeks later he sank into another difficult few weeks of near-breakdowns during his lectures, sleeplessness and high anxiety leading to almost paralysing fear. In a memo titled 'A message to myself when depressed', the extent to which Herb was both suffering deeply, while also capable of self-examination and awareness of his illness, is clear: 'There's clearly a problem here, a medical one of extreme swings of the pendulum. But the dependability of a switch to a high (or initially a medium) is very great. This time my low was longer than usual, over 2½ weeks. But the high was also very high, about 5–6 weeks.'[112]

The end of his final semester of teaching could not come soon enough.

PART 5

TEN

Retirement, 'repatterning' and renewal (1991–2001)

> So what does a morally concerned person do? Try to become knowledgeable, try to educate others, try to facilitate efforts to make dissent visible – whether financially, via donations to worthy projects and institutions, or with one's time and labors given to organizing.
>
> Shalom, Chomsky & Albert, 'East Timor questions & answers'.

The years immediately following his retirement in December 1990 marked a period of transition or, as Herb liked to call it, repatterning – a term he says he borrowed from Elise Boulding. For the first time in many years, Herb spent 1991 and 1992, apart from a few small trips away, at home helping Betty care for her invalid mother, who required a high level of nursing care after suffering a stroke in 1988. He was in good health, cycling, walking and running regularly. Herb and Betty were also settling

into their roles as grandparents to a sizeable brood. Annie and her husband Philip, who were then living in Rye, had four girls, Su Yin, Lily, Nina and baby Bess. In Melbourne, David and Karen had their two boys, Skanda and Rufus, and Rob had a son, Nik. Herb adored children and they him, and he was always a good playmate. Learning to reduce the amount of time he spent working and to relax and indulge in time with his family and at recreation was an important and challenging step as he embarked on the next phase of his life.

A new world order

Herb's retirement coincided with a new wave of hope for change in Indonesia. Scholars pinpoint late 1989 as the time when a confluence of factors – elite conflicts that Suharto saw as a threat to his own position, and increasing societal pressures for reforms – led to an unprecedented period of *keterbukaan* (openness) under the New Order regime.[1] The Indonesian military softened its approach to social protest and unrest; Muslim groups called for a greater political role, and opposition groups – NGOs and local activist collectives – and the international community all urged the regime towards reforms. As Australian political scientist Ed Aspinall, a close observer of this period in Indonesian politics, describes it, the themes of *demokratisasi* and *hak asasi manusia* (human rights) were increasingly popular and 'the question of wider-ranging democratization of politics moved to the centre of the public agenda'. The increasingly vocal Indonesian media began covering controversial issues and steadily pushed the limits of what was a highly government-controlled industry. Students and farmers demonstrating against the government were not suppressed as they had been in the past, and mass mobilisation was

becoming a common form of political expression.[2] By late 1992 calls for reform had moved to mainstream official Indonesian politics, and the Indonesian Democracy Party (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; PDI) also talked about 'change'. In a lengthy interview for *Inside Indonesia* in July 1989 Herb responded to a question about democratisation in Indonesia by placing it in a global context, noting models of success as well as of failure:

> It [talk of democratisation] is partly a response to the way people in other countries are sounding democratic themes, of course. The People's Power movement in the Philippines in 1986 was widely reported in Indonesia and so were the popular demonstrations that catalyzed the transition from Chun Doo Hwan to Roh Tae Woo in South Korea in 1987–88. The election of Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan is part of that story too, and so is perestroika in the USSR.
>
> The democratic forces have had their defeats too … in Burma in 1988 and now in China … [T]he appeal of democracy as an ideology is likely to remain strong. In Indonesia its appeal seems to have been growing in recent years – though national development as a competing theme continues to be stronger.[3]

In the first years of his retirement a number of key projects consumed Herb's work-related energies. Each was linked to the promise of reform and opportunities presented by this unprecedented openness. He remained attached to Monash University through the postgraduate students he continued to supervise and the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies.

A new focus also emerged some time in 1991. Jamie Mackie had approached John Legge with the initial idea that they honour Herb with a special 'send-off' by way of a conference. The theme

seemed obvious and coincidentally in line with Herb's own independent ideas at the time. Democratisation and human rights dominated the Indonesian political conversation. Indonesian intellectuals and activists and foreign scholars of Indonesia looked to the period of parliamentary democracy in the 1950s, with a view to comparing its viability in a post-New Order Indonesia. It was a highly appropriate and timely way to celebrate Herb's career. The organisers approached prospective participants with the aim of holding the conference in Melbourne in late 1992. John engaged Herb's help with suggestions of people to invite and so on; however, they kept secret from him its other role as a celebration of his career. The main attraction for Herb was that it gave him the opportunity to return to his research about Indonesian intellectuals and foreign Indonesianists.

With the end of the Cold War, members of VAPS had decided to wind down their organisation. In its place many of them, including Herb, became involved in the more locally focused and action-based group, the Secure Australia Project (SAP). The project grew out of a VAPS-sponsored half-day conference held in March 1989 on the topic 'Australia's new militarism', a response to the 1987 Defence White Paper and Australia's program of arms build-up under Labor Defence Minister Kim Beazley. After the conference, which he helped to organise, Herb was particularly insistent that 'it was urgent to communicate the message expressed by the speakers to a wider audience'.[4] The SAP described itself as a research and public education group dedicated to common security for Australians and their neighbours. It took the position that Australia's security challenges should be dealt with by non-military means, and that Australia's security would be enhanced by diversified contact and cooperation between the peoples and governments of the region. They

regarded Australia's 'new militarism', as they called it, as provocative in the Asia Pacific. SAP member Gary Smith saw Herb's involvement in the project as based on his concerns about the influence of Australia's militarism on its relationship with Indonesia in particular, and the potential for an arms race between the two nations.[5] The SAP published three collections of essays,[6] which sparked debate among academics, policy-makers and politicians and took the study of Australian foreign policy 'beyond the traditional focus on state security to encompass notions such as "human security"'.[7] Herb was deeply involved in the background workshops and discussions that guided the SAP during these busy years, and in the reviewing and editing processes for the publications and the accompanying public awareness campaigns.[8] When the project ended in 1992, it had achieved many of its intended goals of sparking public debate and challenging policy, including a direct exchange with the Defence Minister.

As Herb's longstanding association with Monash came to an end, a crucial factor in his repatterning process was to find new activities and a new place to work. The guiding hand of Pat Walsh, then director of the Human Rights Office of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) in Melbourne and editor of *Inside Indonesia*, was vital at this time. Pat's office in Fitzroy became an important new place for Herb to work. Over the past decade 'work' for Herb had meant blending his Indonesia interests with peace studies and his activism. Consequently, his work relating to East Timor, together with his research and writing on self-determination claims in multi-ethnic states, had become his priorities. His relationships with 'Timor people' in Indonesia and in Australia, such as Pat and David Scott and Patsy Thatcher, researcher and close friend of Timorese refugees

in Melbourne, sustained his activist impulse. In retirement, he was now free from the constraints and responsibilities attached to his position as mentor for students and as representative of the university, which, combined with his concerns about his access to Indonesia, had limited his public role in Timor activism. *Keterbukaan* also presented opportunities for foreigners to enter the province, giving aid workers, journalists and independence supporters unprecedented access. Like many other observers, Herb saw this period of openness as full of possibilities for East Timor's situation, remarking later that it 'may also go down as one of the major political mistakes of Suharto's long period as President'.[9]

Reflecting this sense of a potential turning point on Timor, in early 1991, with Pat at ACFOA and David Scott at Community Aid Abroad (CAA), they formed the East Timor Talks Campaign (East Timor: Its Time to Talk) with a group of up to seventy supporters, including the Australian East Timor Association (AETA). Launched on 27 October 1991 with the support of East Timorese resistance leader Jose Ramos Horta (Special Representative of the National Council of the Maubere Resistance (Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere; CRNM) and a large number of high-profile Australian and international figures, including Noam Chomsky, Justice Michael Kirby and Phillip Adams, the national campaign called for round-table talks between the East Timorese resistance and Indonesia under the auspices of the United Nations. East Timorese leaders Xanana Gusmão, then in Cipinang prison in Jakarta, and Bishop Belo had both indicated their interest in such talks or consultations. In the week before the launch an historic peace plan for Cambodia in which Australia's Foreign Minister Gareth Evans had played a role was signed. The campaign organisers believed that trends within Indonesia

and internationally had never been so favourable for East Timor and that the time was right 'for a new approach: conflict-resolution through dialogue'.[10] As Pat Walsh told an interviewer in late October 1991, borrowing a little from Jimmy Carter's similar appraisal of the world order made a year or so earlier, 'There are also winds of dialogue and negotiation blowing all over the world as a result of the developments in Eastern Europe, and they are obviously impacting on Indonesia.'[11]

Campaigning for the talks had brought Herb's interests in UN reform and self-determination alternatives into a working group focused on contributing to the debate and search for solutions to East Timor's continuing crisis.[12] For more than a decade, but arguably also dating back to his Bangladesh experiment, Herb had been preoccupied with issues related to self-determination claims and the viability of small states; his passion and energy had been focused on finding a better way to solve these conflicts through the United Nations. His recent collaborations included work with colleagues Ian Bell and Ron Hatley on the West Papua separatist struggle and with Alan Smith on UN reform, with a particular focus on dealing with self-determination claims and separatist movements.[13] In the preceding few years, Herb and Alan had explored contemporary cases of such claims and potential paths to a solution, with a particular focus recently on the Kurds in Iraq. They believed that the political reconstruction necessary in Iraq following the Gulf War presented an opportunity for the UN to activate the 'free association settlement' option formulated in the 1970 UN Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States,[14] as an alternative to protracted secessionist conflict in the hope of achieving full independence in multi-ethnic states. The 'free association settlement' option could be just what a number

of multi-ethnic states needed, 'giving them a way to get off the hook, enabling them to stop wasting resources in fruitless efforts to maintain an untenable status quo'.[15]

Herb and Alan sent their analysis and recommendations in relation to Kurdish claims for self-determination and for Australia to make reform of the UN a foreign policy priority, to senior Australian ministers and parliamentarians including Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and Shadow Foreign Minister Robert Hill. Western Australian Greens Senator Jo Vallentine raised their main points in the Australian Senate on 19 June 1991 and invited the Foreign Minister to respond. Both Hill and Evans replied to Herb and Alan at length with similar conclusions: that the answer was not to establish new institutions within the UN as called for in their report, but to work within existing structures to find a better outcome for such claimants.[16]

Herb was not dissuaded. There was of course great resonance between this argument and the work of the Timor Talks campaign on East Timor's self-determination claims. The main premise of the argument was that history could lead us only so far in judging and settling contemporary claims for self-determination. These must be seen as claims 'by peoples whose grievances are not against a Western European colonial ruler as in the first decades after 1945, but against rulers who have manifestly failed in certain regions of their state to fashion a legitimate form of rule'.[17] As they saw it, new solutions and mechanisms within the UN were needed to address the unique demands of these claims. To resolve them, the authors called for the UN to be reformed in such a way that equipped it to face future self-determination challenges to sovereign states by ethno-nationalist minorities.

The killings at Santa Cruz

> Things will never be the same again.
>
> Feith, 'East Timor and the reputation of Indonesia's Armed Forces'.

On 12 November 1991 soldiers from several battalions of the Indonesian security forces fired on mourners in a funeral procession to Dili's Santa Cruz cemetery. Seventy-two people were reported to have been brutally killed at the cemetery and on their way to hospital and in villages for some hours after the initial attack, and two hundred were reported missing.[18] The killings were witnessed by foreign journalists and aid workers and filmed by British filmmaker Max Stahl, who sent the film to news agencies around the world as irrefutable evidence of atrocities committed by Indonesia in the province. It was potentially a watershed moment for the East Timorese independence struggle in garnering international support. At the time of the massacres, Herb wrote to his friend Marsillam Simanjuntak in Indonesia,

> I have done almost nothing since last Wednesday but talk, argue and follow media accounts of 12.11 and what has followed them … I myself have not been demonstrating, which may be shrewdness, discretion or so on or a reflection of being old, but certainly gives me enhanced admiration for people who have been demonstrating including Indonesians. In any case it is easy for me to concentrate on the job of interpretation …[19]

While the Timor Talks Campaign and AETA focused on lobbying the international community and Australian Government to take a stand on Timor and call Indonesia to account, Herb took a different approach in his first attempt at the 'job of interpretation'. He

wrote an article published that weekend in Melbourne's *Sunday Age* titled 'Massacre may change thinking in Jakarta'. The main thrust of the short article was to see the killings as the beginning of a breakthrough in the intractable conflict in East Timor, because 'One likely consequence of Tuesday's massacre in Dili is that Indonesians outside the Government will be thinking about East Timor in new ways.'

As Herb saw it, the massacres constituted a turning point, for opposition groups in Indonesia could no longer consign East Timor to the 'too-hard basket'. The article expressed the hope that the small but increasingly concerned group of mostly NGO people in Indonesia, for whom the Timorese cause had been secondary to the myriad local struggles and battles they were preoccupied with, and for those in the middle class now talking about democratisation, would start to connect East Timor's future with their own. Herb predicted further that this could act as a catalyst for change in a way that the government program of *keterbukaan* had so far failed to do.[20] The key, he concluded in an unpublished paper written a few weeks later, was the way these Indonesians saw the role of the armed forces: 'Till the recent events in Dili there was widespread support in that middle class group for the doctrine that the army uses to justify its special position, "The Dual Function" doctrine …'[21] Exposure of the army's actions in East Timor, Herb hoped, would now be set within the context of debate on political reform in Jakarta and the question of the role of the armed forces in government. Herb anticipated that once the truth of the conflict in East Timor – the brutality of the Indonesian military and the tenacity of the pro-independence movement – became known, politically conscious Indonesians would 'now recognize that what their government faces is much more serious than they had been told'.[22]

Seeking new possibilities

Herb's letter to Marsillam Simanjuntak, one of the small group of NGO people in Indonesia Herb identified as being concerned about East Timor, principally asked for guidance: 'What sorts of things should people like myself in the outside world be doing about the present situation?'[23] Herb compared the atmosphere in the period after the massacres to October 1965; he had the same sense then as now that great calamity could lead to a breakthrough and end the deadlock. The next day Herb wrote to fellow Timor independence activist Ben Anderson, with a similar theme: 'It is perhaps too early to say emphatically that the anti-Suharto bandwagon has already started rolling, but I don't think it will be too long.'[24]

Herb had raised the 'East Timor problem' on his visits to Indonesia for more than a decade now and had elicited mixed responses from his friends in NGOs and the pro-democracy movement and from academics and public intellectuals. While they listened respectfully to Herb's questioning and call to action on East Timor, most of them remained unwilling to support him. In June 1990, more than a year before the killings at Santa Cruz, Herb published an article in the Indonesian journal *Prospek*, which foreshadowed his Timor Talks work and placed the East Timor situation in the context of his research with Alan Smith on secessionist claims in other multi-ethnic states. Herb argued the need for these states to find an alternative path to resolution of this conflict and suggested 'free association settlement' as a possibility in the case of Indonesia and East Timor. The analysis was balanced; indeed, a supporter of the pro-independence position might have argued that the proposed process conceded too many rights to the Indonesian State. Nevertheless, above the article a note from the editor, who had shown courage in running

the piece, disclaimed any responsibility for the views it presented while acknowledging in gentler terms: 'His article, exposing a certain perspective, is probably useful for us to be able to see the future of East Timor, as an integral part of Indonesia, better and wiser, although as Dr Feith also acknowledges [that] his scientific proposals "are based on speculation, much of which is likely to be mistaken".'[25]

The reaction of Herb's former doctoral student Dewi Fortuna Anwar to this article was fairly typical of those of many of his friends in Indonesia. Soon after it was published Dewi wrote to Herb explaining that, although intellectuals like herself were concerned about East Timor, the political reality was such that from her perspective there was no 'suggestion or even interest for Indonesian academics/social workers that E Timor be ceded from the Republic'. She went on:

> This is not to say that Indonesian intellectuals do not want reforms – political, social and economic – that will improve the living standard of the people in E Timor and reduce the military presence there. But these reforms are thought of in the context of the unifying republic. As far as I am aware academics here do not talk of disassociation but of integration.[26]

As Dewi further explained, in the cases of West Papua and East Timor, moral and ethical arguments would not sway the position of the regime or of the opposition groups: 'Jakarta must be convinced that its present policies are politically and economically, as well as diplomatically costly to its interests. So long as Jakarta can find ways around the problems without having to deal with the issues directly, it will remain deaf to appeals focusing only on moral and ethical aspects.'[27]

Sixteen months later, the massacre drastically changed the boundaries around this 'issue' in Indonesian politics. As Herb saw it, the Santa Cruz massacre gave his decade-long conversations with his Indonesian friends about East Timor new relevance for them and their own struggles. As he argued in his November piece in the *Sunday Age*, the international community's recognition of the New Order's abuses in East Timor amounted, he believed, to Dewi Fortuna Anwar's diplomatic 'cost'. Moreover, it would not only bring international pressure to bear on the regime to curb its repression in Timor but also create space for intellectuals and opposition movements to call for an end to the occupation of Timor and for their own claims for reform in other areas of political and social life. However, such a movement would not eventuate in the immediate aftermath of the massacres, as Herb had hoped, but some years later.

Looking for a middle way

In the aftermath of the Santa Cruz killings Herb's student and close confidant David Bourchier had found his mentor's immediate response to the Dili massacres somewhat unsettling. As Herb's correspondence with Ben Anderson a week or so after the killings shows, personally, Herb was in the grip of a renewed period of optimism. In comparing the situation in East Timor with events in Indonesia in October 1965, this optimism came through more strongly than ever: '… one of the major contrasts with October 1965 is that there is so much that is unambiguously good about what we can expect from this new crisis.' His reaction to the Santa Cruz killings was part of a gathering hopefulness about Indonesia as a whole since the beginning of *keterbukaan*. Herb's letter to Ben continued,

> I am amazed how optimistic I have become over the last few days. I really think a very much better Indonesia is coming into view, an Indonesia in which people like Gus Dur and Goenawan Mohamad will be centre stage … I will readily concede that it is possible that Soeharto has tricks up his sleeve which could make for a very nasty immediate future. But I think his playing them would have positive consequences in as much as there would be deeper mobilization of the opposition and a more discontinuous transition. Yes, possibly a violent one, but not very violent I think, because the world system is operating fairly effectively against that sort of thing these days.[28]

For his student Bourchier, Herb's optimism and excitement in the face of tragedy was surprising. However, this and his acknowledgement that violence is sometimes a necessary evil was not a new position for him. In his mid-1965 analysis of the three-way 'triangle' power struggle in Indonesia, Herb had anticipated that violence (although, like others, he drastically underestimated its scale) could break the deadlock and potentially lead to a resolution. Although he prayed that the outcome would be vastly different, twenty-six years later Herb saw echoes of this potential in relation to East Timor's stagnant struggle for independence and splintering of relations between the army and the President. His instinct was the signature of peace researchers: to see the potential for tragedies such as the struggle in East Timor to have good outcomes, not the least of which is the exposure of the true nature of tyrants. For Herb, the deaths of the Santa Cruz mourners were the beginning of the end of Suharto.

In a letter to Ben Anderson in December 1993, in reply to his friend's rejection of any solution for East Timor that gave

ground to Indonesia's interests, Herb replied: 'My father used to tease me for my conciliationism. "Knoblauch schmaeckt gut und Tschokolade schmaekt gut. Wie gut muss Knoblauch und Tschokolade zusammen schmaecken!" [Garlic tastes great, and chocolate tastes great, so how good they must taste together!]'[29]

For those who had known him a long time, Herb's unbridled optimism and prediction of Suharto's impending demise were true to form. His latest prediction was reminiscent of those he had made after student uprisings in 1974 and 1977. This time, however, Herb sought to apply himself more than in the past to the search for a solution and the design of it. In many ways his peace research, teaching and learning had brought him to this point. But he was also sustained by more practical factors, including his working relationship with Alan Smith, with whom he had been writing papers and opinion pieces on self-determination questions for some years.[30]

In September 1992, not dissuaded by the reaction to it from Australia's politicians, Herb and Alan took their proposal for UN reform on self-determination claims to the IPRA conference in Japan; they returned home still positive about its potential but uncertain about what their next step should be. Over the next year, Herb sent the proposal to various high-ranking politicians and diplomats, including Foreign Minister Gareth Evans; Indonesian Ambassador in Canberra Sabam Siagian; Australian Ambassador in Jakarta Alan Taylor and Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas; and to his old volunteer-graduate friend Elaine McKay, at the Australian Mission to the UN. Herb was impressed by the Foreign Minister's involvement in the Cambodian peace settlement and very keen to influence Evans's work in writing his book *Cooperating for Peace* (commonly referred to as the 'Blue Book') on reform to the UN and its peacekeeping role. However, his

representations to Evans and other senior diplomats and bureaucrats did not have any obvious results.

With his Timor Talks collaborators David Scott and Pat Walsh, Herb contributed to a report in 1992; he also wrote a piece on his own.[31] In an effort to start from a negotiable position to bring the two sides together, these two reports focused on the possibility of a *daerah istimewa* (special region) solution for East Timor within the Indonesian Republic. Although some pro-independence activists, including some of Herb's close friends and colleagues, supported this position, others did not agree. For Ben Anderson, for example, who a few years later referred to the Indonesian occupation of East Timor as a 'holocaust',[32] *daerah istimewa* was never an option because he believed independence was inevitable. In this same correspondence Ben acknowledged that his differences in opinion and approach with his close friend indeed had a long history:

> My general disagreement with you doesn't relate to the intelligent substance of your piece, but with something that between us goes back 30 years. It's a matter of temperament mainly. Your piece looks carefully at both sides' positions, and seeks to find a compromise solution. Temperamentally it is difficult for me. ET has been brutally abused, and I'd like to see them win: justice I suppose. Hence I'm emotionally hostile to treating Jakarta and the ET as 'equal', as it were each with legitimate interests: I don't think Indonesia has one tiny single legitimate interest in ET.[33]

As Elise Boulding explains, 'peace researchers explore best-case scenarios, looking for the emergent possibilities for peace building that exist in every human crisis'.[34] Herb was forthright about

exactly where he stood on East Timor; as he had told a conference in Adelaide two years earlier,

> I have a lot of sympathy for ET nation. I see a spirit there very similar to the spirit of patriotic resistance that characterized the *jaman* Yogya [Yogyakarta era]. But my primary concern isn't for the success of the ET nationalist cause. It's for peace. It's for finding some sort of way out of what I see as a sitsuation of impasse between the Indonesian state and ET nationalism and so I've been trying to explore a range of formulas which might make it possible for the impasse to be broken.[35]

Democracy: a conference

The conference on Indonesian democracy in the 1950s and 1990s, to pay tribute to Herb's teaching and scholarship, was held at Monash University on 17–21 December 1992 and was followed by several smaller conferences and workshops. Several hundred people attended the week-long gathering, which was perhaps the largest of its kind to be held on the theme of democracy in Indonesia. Significantly, more than forty of the participants were Indonesians, including diplomats, intellectuals and journalists for whom this was a rare opportunity for open and wide-ranging debate. Among the participants were some of the most established scholars and intellectuals from within Indonesia and elsewhere, including George Kahin, Ben Anderson, Ruth McVey, Goenawan Mohamad, Marsillam Simanjuntak, Onghokham, Miriam Budiardjo, Buyung Nasution and Abdurrahman Wahid, and most of the large community of Australian Indonesianists. The assembly of such a range of 'Indonesia people' created a unique opportunity for foreign and Indonesian intellectuals to exchange ideas

on democracy and the future of Indonesia. The epic nature of the conference, with more than fifty papers of varying quality, meant that cohesion and concentration was sometimes lacking.[36] However, the rallying point for the exchange of ideas was Herb – his body of work on Indonesia and its politic, and his sensibility towards and passion for the nation and its people – and, consequently, the atmosphere of excitement and expectation seemed to come from Indonesia itself.

As conference participant and journalist Michael Vatikiotis explained, the importance of this gathering was also manifest in the debates that went on in motel rooms and over coffee at the sidelines. He wrote in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*: 'Here on Melbourne's comfortable suburban fringe, some 40 Indonesian intellectuals, professionals and activists … found that having the guts to demand freedom was easy. Deciding on what democracy is or should be was problematic.'[37]

Indonesians and foreign 'experts' at the conference remained divided on the answers to two questions: why constitutional democracy was 'swept away' (to use Herb's term) in the 1950s, and the contemporary question of whether constitutional democracy was 'on the tide' (as Ben Anderson had put it at the conference). Vatikiotis described the two sides on the contemporary question thus: '… on one [side] are the modern liberal theorists who hold the rather fashionable view that democracy marches just a step behind economic development … on the other … are those who fear that relaxing the social and political controls deployed in Suharto's Indonesia will unleash a host of destabilizing genies.'[38]

Herb's presentation to the conference revisited what he admitted was the 'fairly bleak picture' of constitutional democracy he had given in *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*. He admitted that his pessimism was a product of the late

1950s and 1960s, when he had written the book, 'when constitutional democracy seemed a lost cause all over the Third World'. Nonetheless, he made a list (albeit short) of the enduring legacy of constitutional democracy in terms of policy, symbolism and the spirit of nationhood. Herb's line of argument about the reasons for the failure of constitutional democracy in the 1950s was not tempered or watered down. He reiterated his rebuttal of Benda's assertion that 'constitutional democracy ran against the grain of Indonesian history', standing by conclusions he made twenty-five years earlier: 'My own emphasis was and remains on the weakness of the state *vis-à-vis* society and of the roots of this in the fact that Indonesia achieved its independence by revolution.'[39]

Meanwhile, in Indonesia over the coming months initial excitement and anticipation in the pro-democracy movement began to give way to tensions and anxieties surrounding questions of direction and the realisation of just how far there was to go before the New Order vanguard could be overcome. Ahead of the MPR session in March, the PDI leadership backed away from earlier talk of pushing for 'change' and instead pledged their support for Suharto's sixth term as President. Party factions argued about their direction: whether to follow the wave of growing 'people power' or to back the status quo and remain a 'partner of the government'.[40] The debate was fed by fears of repression and by differing understandings of what future democracy should be like in Indonesia. Student protesters accused the PDI of back-pedalling on their pledge to push for change, but its leaders simply replied: 'We talked of change, but not a change of President', maintaining that change will come 'bit by bit, slowly, slowly'.[41] The next step for the PDI 'semi-opposition'[42] was to appoint Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri as its leader, thereby shifting the course of the journey.

Renewal

In late 1993 Alan Smith made Herb a pattern-altering proposition. In his job with the German-funded Friedrich Naumann Foundation in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, Alan worked closely with the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), conducting training programs and workshops on the Thailand–Burma border for the two main groups opposing the Burmese government.[43] The Burman National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma and the Karen-led Democratic Alliance of Burma were composed of minority ethnic groups and guerrilla movements. The training took place in a Karen-controlled village called Manerplaw, a day's travel from Chiang Mai. Alan invited Herb to join a team he was assembling to teach a three-week course on international relations, which was eventually given the title 'Democracy, Federalism and Military Rule in Regional and Global Perspectives', in early 1994. Alan also invited fellow Monash alumnus Ulf Sundhaussen and an Indonesian postgraduate student from Adelaide, Budi, who was researching Burmese politics. When Herb suggested to Alan that Betty could also contribute, the program was expanded to include a women's training workshop.

For Herb and Betty the invitation was timely. Ina Evans was moved to full-time care in July 1993, which meant that they could consider travelling together. In late 1993, for the first time in many years, they made a brief visit to Indonesia and the trip renewed their passion for adventure that had a useful purpose.

Friends and causes

To reach Manerplaw the group travelled north of Chiang Mai by utility vehicle for four hours. Betty counted herself lucky to secure the only passenger seat alongside their young driver while Ulf, Alan, Herb and two others were piled in the back with the

luggage and exposed to the elements. When the road ended, they drove along a shallow river until it also became impassable. The group then clambered down a steep riverbank and into a small motorboat waiting to take them upriver. Until this point, although Alan and his team had made the trip many times, the group had been anxious that they would be stopped by border patrols. Once on their way upstream, they were able to relax and were struck by the beauty of the river and jungle, which Betty wrote home 'was like a romantic dream'.[44]

Herb described the course they were running as 'Political science for political activists'.[45] The thirty-two students were all Karen and included cabinet ministers, brigade commanders and leaders of various organisations. The course was offered at a time when these opposition groups were beginning to look for strategies other than violence to progress their struggle against the Burmese junta. Manerplaw was, Betty wrote in the same letter, 'just like Herb's village near Yogya'. Although the geography and the preoccupations of its residents were very different, the village's simplicity and isolation drew Betty's comparison. In his notes from the trip, Ulf described the conditions for the guest teachers as extremely basic; the new guesthouse had no beds, only mosquito nets, and the toilet was 200 metres up on a hill.[46] There were no telephones, only walkie-talkies operated by Karen Organisation Committee officials.

The close living and working conditions at Manerplaw also presented an opportunity for Herb, Ulf and Betty to get to know each other again. Ulf and Herb had never been close in the way that Herb and Rex Mortimer, Alan and others of his students had become close friends. After Ulf completed his thesis in 1969, they had met at conferences and on Herb's visits to Port Moresby

where Ulf and Rex taught at the University of Papua New Guinea in the 1970s. They had had differences of opinion on the role of the Indonesian army in the 30 September Movement and subsequent killings and about its continuing role in the New Order; they also had professional differences related to the 'politics' of Indonesian studies. Nonetheless they remained occasional correspondents, sometimes sending work back and forth for comment, and Herb always invited Ulf to conferences and the like. For Ulf, however, what he perceived as a lack of deep interest in his work on Herb's part remained an issue of some grievance and a little resentment. Their adventure together in the jungle on the Thailand–Burma border and their shared commitment to good teaching and to the work being done in Manerplaw meant that at the end of their three weeks they were making plans to return together.

Herb went from Manerplaw to Bangkok where he met an old peace studies friend, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, Vice-Rector of Thammasat University and Director of the Thailand Peace Information Centre, before travelling to Jakarta. Betty had returned home to Melbourne via Penang where she visited Annie's parents-in-law. Herb spent several weeks in Jakarta in March and April but, after his highly stimulating and satisfying, albeit physically challenging stay in Manerplaw, he was exhausted. He was also especially anxious about whom he should talk to in Jakarta. He was aware that the position he had taken on East Timor meant he would find it harder to relate to many of his old contacts. More than that, however, was his fierce concern that his lack of work on Indonesian politics in the preceding years had diminished his reputation as an Indonesianist and friend of Indonesia in the eyes of his Indonesian friends and that he was no longer interesting to them but old and ailing.

Herb's circle of contacts in Indonesia had shrunken considerably in the preceding decade. On recent trips he spoke mostly to a close-knit group of friends, including Marsillam Simanjuntak, Onghokham, Goenawan Mohamad, Hardoyo, Arief Budiman, student activist Taufik Rahzen, Catholic priests Ismartono and Mangunwijaya, and East Timor activists such as Ade Rostina Sitompul. Among this group were people he categorised as 'radical democrats' (for example, Budiman) and 'critical pluralists' (for example, Goenawan Mohamad).[47] He very rarely met his peers and fellow alumni from American universities from the 1950s and 1960s, such as the so-called Berkeley mafia; some of whom fell into another of his categories, 'economic nationalists'; and other intellectuals, such as Nugroho Notosusanto, with whom Herb had little contact before his death in 1985. Ideological difference or, as Herb described it to George Kahin, the 'disposition to play within the system',[48] was a wedge that even old friendship could not easily overcome. Around this time Herb described Soedjatmoko as a 'luminous' intellectual and ideological influence in his life, yet in the years before the former diplomat's death in 1990, Herb had seen very little of him.[49] Some years earlier, in a nostalgic mood, perhaps, but possibly deep down already mourning the passing of these once vibrant and important friendships, Herb wrote to Nugroho expressing this struggle and acknowledging that nostalgia was all they had left in common:

> As I get older, and as cancer strikes down more friends in my own age range, I think more about friendship and its preciousness. What is friendship between two people like us all about? I want to insist that it is more than a memory, that it has a continuing reality despite the barriers that have grown up between us.[50]

An invitation to meet the enemy

In Jakarta in April 1994, grappling with his exhaustion and a growing self-doubt, Herb received an invitation by way of a *Tempo* journalist, Amran Nasution, for him to meet Lieutenant General Prabowo Subianto, son-in-law of Suharto, then head of the elite armed forces unit Kopassus and suspected of playing a key role in the Santa Cruz massacre. Amran told Herb that Prabowo had recently complained to him that so many foreign academics were biased against him. Amran had suggested that Prabowo seek them out and give them his version of events, offering to help him make contact with them.[51] The invitation sent Herb into a tailspin as he grappled with the pros and cons of meeting with Prabowo. The opportunity to meet a man he had been following very closely in relation to his involvement in East Timor and elite Indonesian politics for some time appealed to his desire to get closer to policy thinking on East Timor. Herb was, however, simply not confident that he would get through such a meeting. He was anxious about suffering a panic attack beforehand and of drawing further attention to himself and to those close to him, if he went through with the meeting.

Herb was at the time connected to the small Jakarta-based network of East Timor sympathisers – Indonesians and foreigners – carrying out clandestine activities inside Indonesia and was in contact with them on this visit to Jakarta. His contacts included former Monash and Melbourne University student Kirsty Sword, whose work as in-country liaison officer for Overseas Services Bureau (OSB) provided her with a safe cover for her work for the Timorese independence cause. On this visit to Jakarta, Kirsty had sought Herb's advice about an attempt seven East Timorese men were soon to make to enter the Swedish and Finnish embassies in Jakarta and seek asylum. She took Herb to meet some of the men

on the eve of their attempt. Kirsty wrote some years later: 'My nervousness and sense of responsibility for what was looming in two days time was growing, and I knew Herb's calm and supportive words would have a soothing effect.' She was keen to make sure that the Timorese knew all the risks of their plan. Kirsty recalled Herb's advice to her: 'Herb concurred that given their determination, the only thing to do was to be as well prepared as possible, both in terms of possible reactions from embassy officials and of maximising the local and international media potential of the event.'[52]

Once at home in Melbourne Herb conveyed in a letter to American Indonesianist Bill Liddle Amran's offer from Prabowo without explaining why he had chosen not to take up the invitation, and suggested that Bill might want to do so instead.

A few months later, Herb wrote a stinging letter of protest to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* over an article by P.P. McGuinness entitled 'Truth about Timor please', in which McGuinness referred to the atrocities in East Timor as the 'alleged "genocide"' and called it a 'myth assiduously cultivated by the propagandists and their dupes'. Herb meticulously pointed to Australian Government reports and to others by academics, which agreed that at least 200 000 East Timorese had died during Indonesian occupation of the province, and he translated the figure to the startling fact that 80 per cent of East Timorese belonged to families of which members had been killed violently.[53]

The 'breakthrough' from inside

Almost three years had passed since the Santa Cruz massacre, before Cornell-trained Indonesian anthropologist George Aditjondro took the lead role of public intellectual agitator, or, in the words of a former colleague, 'prominent subaltern activist',[54]

and spoke out against Indonesia's occupation of East Timor and brutalisation of its people. Herb heralded Aditjondro's outspokenness as a 'breakthrough' for awareness-raising on Timor in Indonesia.[55] Aditjondro had condemned the situation in Timor on several occasions at international conferences in late 1993 and early 1994, in small local publications and at seminars at Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU), where he taught in the postgraduate program. In March 1994 his comments were picked up by an Australian journalist attending a seminar at SWCU and included in an article for the *West Australian* entitled 'Dili massacre lies exposed'.[56] The response of Indonesia's government and military elite to the report was unprecedented and vitriolic. Aditjondro was attacked and defamed and his position at SWCU made precarious.

The publication of Aditjondro's comments on Timor coincided with a period of unprecedented dispute and industrial division at SWCU, which had begun a year earlier following the disputed election of the university's president. Some of the SWCU academics, including Aditjondro and sociologist Arief Budiman, who was a high-profile leader of the group of 'dissidents', organised formal protests that attracted large crowds. When Aditjondro's position at the university was threatened, his colleagues actively supported his right to remain on the staff. Scholars of Indonesia in Australian universities and human rights groups also issued letters of protest to SWCU's leadership. One of those involved in the protests at SWCU, Ariel Heryanto, has described the situation at the university in detail, observing that its rapid expansion and considerable success in the preceding decades reflected a change throughout the nation. The conflict at SWCU, Heryanto wrote, 'suggests the case of the inability (perhaps impossibility) of a relatively simple and old administrative establishment to respond to the rapid

growth of its own institution'.[57] The media interest in and coverage of the conflict at SWCU had been considerable, so Indonesia's major newspapers and news magazines were quick also to report the Aditjondro and Timor story.

Meanwhile in Melbourne, Herb and the Timor Talks campaign team saw George Aditjondro's criticisms of Indonesia's role in East Timor as a 'coming out' of Indonesian intellectuals on the issue, lifting the veil of secrecy and comprising a leap forward in raising public awareness about their government's actions in the rebellious province.[58]

New patterns

For Herb and Betty Manerplaw had marked the beginning of a significant period of renewal. Their heightened awareness and understanding of the situation in Burma led to a new engagement and activism, which extended to the detention of Burmese freedom leader Aung San Suu Kyi. Betty, in particular, started working with local groups arranging resettlement for Burmese student refugees on their arrival in Australia from camps in Thailand and worked with local groups to raise the profile of this issue in Australia. The family also decided to make Arthur's now vacant house next door available for some of the new arrivals. As they had so often in the past, Betty and Herb also continued to open their home to friends in need. Home for a break from his teaching at Gadjah Mada University (UGM) in Yogyakarta, as he had in the past, Lance Castles boarded with them in the Nuthouse, and Patsy Thatcher stayed for some months in their front room.

Their travels to and work in Manerplaw had proved to Betty and Herb that they were still physically and mentally capable of

facing a challenge and change in their lives; moreover, they had been reminded of the joy that teaching gave them and went ahead with plans to return to Burma in early 1995. In late March, shortly before they were due to depart, Betty's mother died and the trip was postponed, indefinitely as it turned out.

Later in the year Herb and Betty travelled to Yogyakarta on a trip that focused on research on the social justice work of Catholic and Protestant church groups there that stemmed from Betty's work with the Australian Council of Churches (ACC). They enjoyed the reversal of roles; Betty was research leader and Herb her assistant. Betty had been to Indonesia several times in the preceding years, leading school groups, on ACC business and on a family holiday to Bali. Her trip with Herb two years earlier was the first they had taken on their own together since 1967, and this 1995 trip was the first in which Herb's agenda took a back seat to hers. They rediscovered what a good working team they were and how very much at home they felt when they were together in Indonesia, especially in Yogyakarta. They stayed with Lance, who was back at UGM in his university accommodation in Bulak Sumur, a quiet leafy enclave adjacent to the campus. It was a simple bungalow with verandas and a small garden, but it was peaceful and reminiscent of a time before Indonesia's cities were filled with motorcycles and high-rise buildings. They resumed the easy rhythm of their long friendship with Lance; talk of politics flowed freely, and they especially enjoyed the steady stream of students coming and going.

Herb and Betty returned to Melbourne in late 1995 with plans to arrange to live and work in Yogyakarta for a year or two. His former student Ichlasul Amal was a senior member of the Politics Department at the university and jumped at Herb's suggestion that he might join the International Relations program in exchange for

a stipend and accommodation. Even better, they would be happy to share accommodation with Lance. They hoped some teaching work could be found for Betty, too.

In Melbourne Herb made contact with another old friend, Peter Britton, now on the Indonesia desk at the Overseas Services Bureau. With Peter's help Herb and Betty would be placed at UGM under OSB's sponsorship, which meant they would have administrative support for their visas and for finding Betty a job. At the Indonesian end Kirsty Sword was also eager to help. They found Betty a six-month position at Atma Jaya, the Catholic university close to UGM, teaching English to academic staff from the Faculty of Social Sciences. They were to spend a second six months in Padang at Andalas University. On 3 January 1996 Herb and Betty departed for Indonesia, where they planned to stay for a year, with the option of extending their stay for a second year. Peter Britton had made a special arrangement for the Feiths that differed from the normal requirement that volunteers committed to stay for a minimum of two years. As it turned out, they did stay for that length of time and returned again before the end of the decade.

Yogyakarta

Life at Bulak Sumur 13B with Lance and his boarder Samsuri, a student at nearby Islamic State University, was almost idyllic. The simplicity of these shared living arrangements matched the deliberate frugality and generous spirit of their lifestyle at home in Melbourne. Herb was not prone to superlatives when describing the aesthetics of his surroundings; indeed he seemed oblivious to them most of the time, but about life at Bulak Sumur he was effusive: 'Many aspects of everyday life here are enjoyable, sitting on the front veranda as the sun is rising, going [for] walks

in the sunset hours, watching the near symmetrical volcano to our North and riding our bikes through the semi-village sections of the city.'[59] Betty offered a slightly less romantic impression of their albeit comfortable and mostly peaceful surroundings and referred frequently in her letters to family to the murderous traffic on the main roads and ever-present smog from persistent burning of rubbish and garden prunings, lamenting, 'Jogja could be beautiful again.'[60]

A small community of Australian friends in Yogyakarta made for an especially warm welcome. As well as Lance there were a group of Australian Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) nuns living in a community nearby, as well as Herb's former student Krishna Sen and her husband David Hill and their daughter Mita. Krishna and David were coordinating the newly established Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies (ACICIS) program, which brought Australian students on exchange to UGM. Over the next few years other Australians, including David Reeve, Gerry and Hélène van Klinken and Paul Stange, would also spend extended periods in Yogyakarta with ACICIS, as did many young and enthusiastic Australians.

Herb and Betty also found a wider sense of community. Herb rekindled his now long connection to his *keluarga desa* in Pendoworedjo forty-five minutes away and forged new friendships with their housekeepers Ibu and Pak Pawiro, the elderly woman who came to the house to sell them vegetables, their tailors and their much-valued bike-repair man, Pak Mul. In the rapidly modernising city of Yogyakarta, bicycles were being replaced by motorbikes and cars. Riding their bikes around town, Herb and Betty were an unusual sight, not the least because they were foreigners and wore safety helmets. Their choice of transportation meant that they were visible and close to people on the street. The slow

and steady speed at which Herb and Betty moved (along the back lanes and alleys as much as possible) allowed them to call out to people as they passed and to hear a response. It was a very deliberate choice of transportation, as Herb told his friends: 'As in Melbourne, we are making a statement by cycling. And we enjoy that of course.'[61]

Herb taught an undergraduate course on International Institutions and a postgraduate class on Theories of Political Development and gained enormous satisfaction from it. Although Betty's teaching arrangements at Atma Jaya initially proved casual and slow to begin, she too soon settled in and enjoyed immensely the intelligent young academics with whom she was working. Herb and Betty worked on their teaching plans together, concentrating on innovative techniques, which involved a lot of small-group activities, proposition-selecting games on topics like globalisation and democracy and, in Betty's classes, singing.

In Herb's classes the emphasis was on student-initiated discussions and group presentations. He rearranged the classroom furniture from rows into small clusters and round-table formations, using again techniques he had used in his Rich World–Poor World classes in the 1970s and peace studies courses in the 1980s. For his Indonesian students it was a new and quite revolutionary approach in a context in which most university teachers still lectured to a silent and passive audience. Their students were also immensely grateful to Herb, Lance and Betty for opening their personal libraries to them. Herb, aware of the paucity of books and research materials in Indonesian universities, had brought with him anything he or his students might need and was only too happy for students to take a book and photocopy the whole thing.

The residents of 13B welcomed students, journalists and colleagues into their home for wide-ranging conversation. Among

the regulars to Bulak Sumur was a group of East Timorese students who sometimes came together and sometimes separately. East Timorese students in Indonesia were under the constant surveillance of intelligence agents, and at Bulak Sumur, Herb, Betty and Lance provided a relatively safe place for them to discuss events in Timor and their own clandestine pro-independence activities. Faustino (Faus) Gomes, a PhD student in Public Administration, was one of those who visited regularly and became firm friends with Herb and Betty. A year later, when threats against Faus and his family became extreme, they helped him secure safe passage to Melbourne by a route similar to the one Herb had used to assist ethnic Chinese Indonesian friends thirty years earlier. In some haste Herb arranged for Faus to enrol in a masters course in Monash's Graduate School of Government without fee (in accordance, as Herb persuasively argued to the program's director, with Monash's Memorandum of Understanding with UGM),[62] loaned him the airfare and arranged for him to live in their house at Kyarra Road.

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Herb described their pace of life in Yogyakarta as 'relaxed … the stress is mainly what the books call eustress, more stretching than burdensome'. They had time for relaxation, perhaps more than Herb had enjoyed for a long time: 'We manage to spend a lot of time sitting on one of our two verandas, looking at sunrises and sunsets, watching new leaves come out on the banana trees and looking at birds and the occasional lizard or frog, writing in our diaries … reading, planning and just talking.'[63]

Ibu and Pak Pawiro came to the house for five hours a day six days a week to help with washing, ironing, cleaning and cooking,

releasing this time for its residents. Another key element of their slower pace was undoubtedly the lack of a telephone at Bulak Sumur 13B. In Melbourne Herb and the telephone were never far apart; it rang constantly in their busy household. If people wanted to contact them now, they did so by post, fax or, if the matter was urgent, used the phone of the ACICIS officer living nearby. Otherwise, Herb and Betty used one of the many *wartel* (*warung telepon*: telephone kiosk) a short walk or cycle away. David Hill also introduced Herb to the internet and email. Although he was immediately excited by the possibilities of email, Herb had only basic computer skills so it could not compete with the fax, with which he was much enamoured. From Yogyakarta Herb remained in close contact with David Bourchier, who was in the final stages of writing his thesis, using an effective process of faxing drafts back and forth between Yogyakarta (and later Padang) and Melbourne.

Winds of change

Herb and Betty arrived in Indonesia in early 1996 at a turning point in its political history. Although the official period of *keterbukaan* had been brought to an abrupt end with the banning of liberal news magazines *Tempo*, *Editor* and *DeTik* in June 1994 and a clampdown on social movements, dissent and demands for reform would not be easily suppressed. NGOs, labour groups and student groups, such as the newly formed leftist student party People's Democratic Party (Partai Rakyat Demokratik; PRD), had used *keterbukaan* to promote opposition to the regime. Campuses around Indonesia, particularly in the Central Java cities of Yogyakarta, Solo and Semarang, became incubators for the reformist student groups.

Meanwhile, the somewhat surprising popularity of Megawati Sukarnoputri presented an unprecedented challenge to the New

Order and to Suharto himself. In January 1996, as Betty and Herb arrived in Yogyakarta, a PDI stronghold where Megawati was immensely popular, her supporters were doing the once unthinkable: encouraging their leader to issue a direct challenge to the presidency. Over the next six months, because of the potential threat she posed to the New Order, the government orchestrated Megawati's removal from the PDI leadership. Rather than diffuse the problem, however, deposing Megawati brought her supporters on to the streets in even greater numbers. In July they took over the PDI headquarters in Jakarta, demanding that she be reappointed as their leader. On 27 July, the eve of Herb and Betty's departure for Padang, the occupation of the PDI headquarters was brought to a violent end when hundreds of government-hired thugs attacked the protesters while security forces stood by, sparking riots across East Jakarta.

In the aftermath of the 27 July Affair, as it became known, the government cracked down severely on sources of dissent, raising the communist bogey again in attacks on the socialist PRD, labour unions and NGOs.[64] The government's actions sparked anger and confusion not only among PDI and Megawati followers and other dissident groups but also, as Herb observed, among ordinary people frustrated by the government's hypocrisy. He saw the broader social effect of the clampdown on the PDI protesters as 'a sense of not knowing whom to blame and what to hope for' and hedged his bets about the possible outcome, telling a seminar in early August, 'I think there are grounds for hope as well as fear.'[65] As a consequence of the widening sense of disenfranchisement among the population, Herb strongly felt that the time was right for deeper exploration of non-violence and anti-violence as a means of protest in Indonesia, leading to the possible overthrow of repressive leadership. He was concerned that

non-violent forms of protest, such as those used in the Philippines in 1986 and Eastern Europe in 1989, were being not widely discussed and written about in Indonesia. He observed that, in this context as in others, 'The culturalism of much contemporary Indonesian discourse, the widespread belief that Indonesia is very different from all other societies, is undoubtedly an important barrier to inter-societal learning in relation to political practice', including non-violent resistance.[66] Drawing on David Bourchier's now completed thesis 'Lineages of organicist political thought in Indonesia', Herb wrote, 'Culturalism means that even many Indonesians sympathetic to the idea of non-violence see it as something for which the cultural foundations don't exist in their society.'[67] He countered this perception by pointing to Indonesian historical and cultural traditions, including the pre-colonial Javanese practice of *pepe*, whereby villagers sit peacefully outside the sultan's palace to express their demands, and to more recent examples of the adoption of non-violence by some exceptional intellectual and religious leaders in Indonesia. Among them were the Muslim leaders Nurcholish Madjid and Abdurrahman Wahid, who had recently convened a conference on Islam and non-violence, and Taufik Rahzen, leader of an indigenous non-violence movement started by Yogyakarta students who had adopted their Anti-Violence Manifesto in 1989. In an atmosphere of deep frustration and anger in which people were talking openly about 'people's power', Herb was anxious to use any opportunity to promote the potential of non-violence as a method for political defiance.

Padang

Herb and Betty were very happily settled in Yogyakarta and, if plans had not been so far advanced, they might have sought to

stay there. Nevertheless, they approached their move to Padang, the capital of West Sumatra, with eager anticipation of discovering a new part of Indonesia. Neither had spent an extended period living outside Java. Herb took up a position in the Politics Department at Andalas University, Sumatra's oldest university, and Betty joined the Language Training Centre as an English language assistant. Because the campus is on Bukit Karamuntiang, a hilltop fifteen kilometres from the city centre, with staff accommodation at the bottom of the hill, cycling or walking to the university was not possible, so they relied on the staff jeep to ferry them to and from their offices. Measured against their environs and accommodation at Bulak Sumur, their situation in Padang was never going to satisfy in the same way. So it was that Herb's normally irrepressible optimism and easily pleased sensibility was dented a little by their first impressions of their new home.[68]

The university accommodation was adjacent to a cement factory, which Betty and Herb quickly discovered had a financial relationship with the university, and noise and pollution levels were higher than in their relatively sheltered enclave at UGM. Determined to make the best of things, they quickly set about settling into their new home. Betty planted a garden, and Herb arranged for shelves to be built for his books. They enjoyed visiting the market in town and began to attend services at the local Catholic church as they had in Yogyakarta. Within months of their arrival, however, Betty began to experience frequent dizzy spells. She found an Iranian Baha'i doctor who greatly impressed her and who prescribed rest and quiet. Betty's health and their frustrations with the environment and with aspects of the university operations made them decide not to extend their contract when it expired at the end of semester. But neither were they in a hurry to leave Indonesia. Herb contacted Ichlasul Amal and his

colleagues at UGM and Betty contacted her Atma Jaya colleagues and, with OSB's assistance, they arranged to return to their jobs in Yogyakarta for another full year. Both institutions were happy to have them back, and Lance welcomed them home to Bulak Sumur 13B.

Crisis

> Do not be afraid of every conflict. Conflict can be very healthy, something good, but do not be violent, hit people or intimidate them.
>
> Herb Feith quoted in *Kompas*, 20 March 1999

The next twelve to eighteen months proved to be the most exciting politically and socially in Indonesia for more than thirty years, and Herb was well placed to witness them and to test his theory of crisis in opportunity. In December 1996 and January 1997 a disturbing series of riots broke out in towns across Java, targeting mostly the businesses, homes and places of worship of ethnic Chinese Indonesians and symbols of authority such as police posts and courthouses. In a letter to friends in February 1997, Herb detailed the range of themes under which the riots were being interpreted in Indonesia. Among theories that the violence was based either on ethnic and religious resentment or on class-based horizontal conflicts, he found the analysis that linked the unrest to a theory of regime decline the most convincing, observing that it could 'be easily linked to the succession issue and particularly to the key dates of May 97 [parliamentary elections] and March 98 [presidential election by the MPR]'.[69] It was, he posited, a further sign that people were growing tired of the status quo.

In May 1997 the parliamentary elections produced another, more or less stage-managed Golkar party victory. Observers

like Herb and Lance nonetheless found grounds for optimism. The election campaign was held in a nation under extremely tight security as the government tried desperately to keep rising popular discontent at bay. Megawati and Amien Rais, a leader of the mass Muslim organisation Muhammadiyah and a political science academic, became a focus for this emerging protest movement, particularly among those from the urban middle classes. Predictably the government came down heavily on opposition protest but, rather than legitimising the regime as it had in the past, the heavy-handed suppression, as Ed Aspinall observed, 'simply dramatized the exclusion of opposition, rather than its co-optation' into the Pesta Demokrasi ('festival of democracy').[70] Herb, Lance and Betty followed the May elections closely. Herb joined a student election empowerment team observing the parliamentary elections in villages around Central Java and watched the activities of student groups and emerging political leaders. Herb and Lance were particularly interested in and impressed by Amien Rais as he worked with opposition movements, students and Muhammadiyah followers, galvanising growing discontent across social and class strata.

Then, almost overnight, the game changed. In early July, following the floating of the Thai baht and its immediate 20 per cent devaluation against the US dollar, the Asian currency crisis hit and the Indonesian rupiah began its freefall, initially dropping in value from Rp2450 per US dollar to Rp2700. Within months the region's economies were in crisis, with Indonesia hit the hardest because of the deep structural weaknesses in its economic, financial and banking systems, together with a lack of transparency and high levels of overseas debt.[71] Inflation skyrocketed to 78 per cent and the poverty rate jumped from a historical low of 11 per cent in 1997 to 40 per cent in 1998.[72]

As the economic crisis in Indonesia began to take hold, at the invitation of Taufik Rahzen and with Herb's assistance, Richard Falk and his wife visited Yogyakarta and Bali for two weeks, observing Indonesian cultural life and speaking in various public forums.[73] Falk repeatedly told Herb that, given the economic gains of the past decades, he was surprised that so many Indonesians he talked to were pessimistic about their futures and by the widespread sense of dismay and confusion. In an article Herb wrote for *Kompas* about Falk's trip, he ended with a quote from a talk the American had given to Masyarakat Seni Pertunjukan Indonesia in Jakarta, which might have given many in its Indonesian audience food for thought about their future prospects: 'We are entering a period of the collapse of the political imagination, at both the local and international levels. One of its characteristics is the failure to stem/repress violence within the democratic system. It is like we have lost the sensibility to face the possibility of change.'[74]

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After two years in Indonesia Herb departed in February 1998, as economic and social tensions began to boil over in food riots in towns across Java and elsewhere and as key stakeholders in the government – military, Islamic groups and the Suharto family – engaged in diversionary tactics to deflect blame for the crisis. Betty had already left in December to visit Annie and her family in Brisbane, and Herb had felt her absence keenly. They had, however, already decided that they would be coming back – they hoped in the second half of the year for eighteen months – thus establishing what they hoped to make a regular pattern of life in Yogyakarta and Melbourne. On his way home, Herb travelled

to India to visit his son David and his family, who were living in Auroville, a communal settlement in Tamil Nadu.

While he was there, Herb wrote a short essay on the present phases of Indonesian politics, depicting the polemic between the optimists and the pessimists surrounding the possibility of Suharto being pushed out. Of greater interest to Herb, for whom Suharto's demise had always been inevitable, was the 'shadow cast by the future'. Who among the key contenders for the army's leadership would win the contest and, therefore, a chance at Suharto's job: the heir apparent, General Wiranto, or son-in-law Lieutenant General Prabowo? What part would emerging leaders of the opposition movements, Amien Rais, Megawati and Nadhlatul Ulama's Abdurrahman Wahid, hope to play? Herb's essay was a close, detailed and balanced reading of Indonesia's elite politics in the manner of his analysis of leadership possibilities in the 1950s. As ever, he tried to draw out possible coalitions and strategic alliances on all sides of politics while not backing one outcome over another.[75]

Given the bets he had lost over the years tipping Suharto's pending demise, it is ironic that the President's resignation on 21 May 1998, amid huge student protest and mass rioting in Jakarta and other major cities, took Herb by surprise. Suharto's re-election at the MPR session in March, although disappointing, was in the end predicted. As Herb and other foreign observers saw it, the government's bloody suppression of the student protests on 12 May at Trisakti University and deflection of blame for the economic crisis on to Chinese business and foreign interests had at least postponed a change in power. Back home, in a talk to Community Aid Abroad and Amnesty members, on 17 May, Herb admitted to being less hopeful about a change in regime than he had been a week earlier when the student protests were gaining

ground, observing that the shootings of students and mass rioting since then painted a 'gloomier picture' of further crackdowns.[76] In the midst of the student protests, violence and attacks on mostly ethnic Chinese Indonesians, what Herb and other outsiders could not see was that Suharto's support among the elite groups he relied upon for his power – the armed forces and business – was collapsing and, with it, ultimately his presidency.[77]

Herb's first public presentation after Suharto's resignation was to a forum 'Whither Indonesia?' organised by the National Council of Churches of Australia (NCCA) in early June. His typed presentation began, 'I have been very happy about Indonesia in the last two weeks and I want to give you reasons why I think that is justified'; a handwritten annotation added, 'despite the way so many Indonesians are suffering extreme material hardship'. Herb saw a hopeful atmosphere in Indonesia in which 'the honest people who had the courage to resist the regime have become heroes'. He saw the leaders of the democracy movement as sensible and driven and that, for them, this has been a long and well-planned breakthrough. He did not, however, allow the euphoria of these early days to carry him away: 'I still see … major dangers lurking.' His concerns, he told the Melbourne audience, included persistent anti-Chinese feeling, the potential for indigenous Indonesians to inflict damaging structural change on the economy, corruption, necessary improvements in education and the impact of free trade unions on the competitiveness of Indonesia's exports. Of most concern, he warned, was the fact that 'Civil society is feeble … and the rule of law tradition has been weakened. That needs to be seen in relation to the country's high potential for communal conflict (inter-religious, inter-ethnic and inter-regional).'[78]

Herb's instinct in the first months of *reformasi* Indonesia was

to interpret and analyse this extraordinary moment in the political history of Indonesia and its future and to educate, especially an Indonesian audience if he could, about the possibilities it brought. In October he wrote an article published in the *Jakarta Post*, precipitated by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir's recent attack on his old friend and Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim (which Herb called 'strange accusations and physical intimidation and violence'[79]). Apart from the initial paragraph or so, the article was in fact a searing and sharp analysis of the last-ditch attempts of the Suharto regime to cling to power, from its last months of desperate and ruthless acts, including the kidnappings and murders of opposition activists and students, to two years earlier and the 27 July Affair, which he argued was 'a dress rehearsal to this year's grand show'. Using American cultural historian William Irwin Thompson's investigations of enantiodromia, which, applied to politics, Herb interpreted as 'desperate situations call for desperate measures', Herb's article was an early attempt to understand and analyse the violence and brutality that so characterised the Indonesian regime. The article gave a long historical view of institutionalised violence in Indonesia.

Reformasi and the *pengamat* intellectual

Herb and Betty returned to Yogyakarta later in 1998, into the middle of long-awaited *reformasi* Indonesia. Indonesians were planning for free elections and democratic government. In this dynamic social and political atmosphere in which the thirst for knowledge about Indonesia's history and the potential for its future reached new heights, Herb found himself part of the growing celebrity or *pengamat* (observer) intellectual culture that blossomed in Indonesia in this period.[80] He was well known in Indonesia's academic, select media and political circles and among

Indonesian students who studied at Australian universities. Now he became known to Indonesia's mass newspaper-reading public. Although journalists had been regular visitors to Bulak Sumur, after the fall of the New Order in May 1998 his comment and analysis of politics, particularly his comparisons of *reformasi* with Indonesia's 1950s parliamentary democracy, were in much greater demand.

The end of the New Order allowed for an opening up of Indonesia's history and for room to challenge the national narratives. In the immediate post-New Order period, there was a yearning to remember the nation's nationalist past and its great leaders, such as Sjahrir, Mohammad Hatta and Sukarno, in a nostalgic yet highly political trip back to the future, back to the idealistic and heady days of the early nation-state. Overwhelmingly, too, there was a desire to react against the oppressive regulation and uniformity of the national 'history' more broadly. Gerry van Klinken described the atmosphere at this time: 'Out of the market of ideas, now much less controlled by state censors, were a host of alternative histories, whose persuasive power could determine not merely the future of the nation-building project, but perhaps that of the Indonesian nation itself.'[81]

The increased demand from journalists for comment from the celebrity intellectual (*pengamat*) in the *reformasi* period can also be understood in this context.[82] Herb's unique position as an expert (*pakar*) on Indonesian politics and history, whose engagement with Indonesia spanned almost the life of the nation itself, meant he could not only help Indonesians learn about the past but also provide guidance towards a democratic future. For the students and journalists who sought Herb's opinion on politics at this time, it was his knowledge of Indonesian history, particularly of its experience of parliamentary democracy, that they valued most.

In keeping with the desire to feed this hunger for knowledge of the political past, Herb was preoccupied with his 'activistic impulses', as he described them;[83] he was concerned about closing the gap between what Indonesians knew about themselves and what foreign experts knew about their politics and history. Herb could have used the phrase 'educational activism' to describe the kinds of things he had been doing for decades now, sometimes clandestinely, as during the 1970s and 1980s when he brought books, articles and pamphlets into Indonesia or sent them with trusted couriers.

In the *reformasi* atmosphere of publishing renewal he saw an opportunity that had not existed under the previous regime for some works by foreign scholars to be published in translation. In 1995 his chapter on Guided Democracy from McVey's 1963 collection was translated into Indonesian and published by Pustaka Sinar Harapan.[84] The list of books Herb hoped to see published in translation included Rex Mortimer's *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959–1965* and Robert Cribb's multi-author collection *Indonesian Killings of 1965–1966* and his own *Indonesian Elections of 1955*. Herb was especially persistent in pushing for the publication of Lance Castles' Yale doctoral dissertation 'The political life of a Sumatran residency: Tapanuli 1915–1940', providing funds for its translation and finding Ford Foundation support to cover printing costs. The book was eventually published by the Gramedia group under its KPG imprint. In the second half of 1998 and early 1999 Herb, with his friends Gerry van Klinken and Ed Aspinall, edited a collection of analyses and news reports on the fall of the New Order, *The Last Days of President Suharto*. The book provides a chronology and analysis of the last months and weeks of Suharto's presidency, in articles by journalists and academics written in those last weeks, and is in

keeping with Herb's keen, long-held interest in acting not only as analyst but also as documenter, archivist and educator.

His work at UGM became focused on the newly established Centre for Security and Peace Studies (CSPS), a research and postgraduate studies centre. In many ways CSPS was the realisation of his hopes in the 1970s and 1980s of establishing such a centre at Monash and an extension of his involvement in the mid-1980s as a founding member of the Australian National University Peace Research Centre. With his old friend Ichlasul Amal as Rector of UGM and Rizal Panggabean as its director, his involvement with CSPS was a perfect fit. The open and dynamic approach to research and teaching at CSPS was modelled on approaches to learning that Herb and Betty had been using for many years in Australia and Indonesia.

Elections

Reformasi politics, meanwhile, rocketed forward and plans were made for Indonesia's first democratic parliamentary elections in forty-four years. In the spirit of reform and freedom a raft of new political parties emerged, eager to play a part in forming and governing a post-Suharto, democratic Indonesia. Forty-eight parties, as opposed to only three in the New Order, contested the historic election in June 1999. As he had in May 1997, Herb toured villages in Central Java observing the elections. He was part of a program involving almost 600 UGM students and staff led by Rizal from CSPS. As well as observing voting day, the program sent a group of more than a hundred students to the villages in the Gunung Kidul area two months earlier to observe the campaign and, as the organisers described it, act as *pendampingan* – simply being alongside the villagers.

A few weeks before the vote, Herb and Betty joined Rizal and

a team from UGM to tour some of these villages. Gunung Kidul was, coincidentally, one of the rural areas Herb visited in Central Java in the 1950s, when his fellow graduate volunteers Vern and Merle Bailey ran a medical clinic to treat malnutrition in what was then a dry and denuded landscape.[85] Almost fifty years later, Herb found the landscape drastically altered; it was now green and somewhat prosperous and caused him to reflect on the transformation, admitting, 'It made me feel that one has to give Suharto and his New Order good marks for a lot of things.' As soon as he had written those words, Herb checked himself, very aware that it was 'a counter-suggestive thing to say here at the moment, especially after the publicity which has been given to the recent *Time* magazine cover story about Suharto's $15 billion fortune'.[86]

These comments almost thirty years later about the effects of Suharto development program might seem uncharacteristic to some of those in Australia, America and Jakarta with whom Herb debated the New Order's economic and political management in the 1970s, but they are consistent with Herb's approach to Indonesia from the beginning. His approach was highly experiential and driven by observation. As he advised a young American with an interest in pursuing Indonesia research in 1966, his preferred style of research was 'in depth interview over systematic surveys' and ideally included an extended period in the field.[87] It is unlikely, of course, that Herb would have allowed himself to make unguarded comments like these when Suharto was still in power. Herb was aware of the statistics on improved indices in Indonesia in terms of poverty levels, access to healthcare and reduction in infant mortality and so on, presented over thirty years of New Order rule, which many economists with an interest in Indonesia regularly lauded. He weighed more heavily, however, the loss of freedoms and basic human rights behind the improved indices,

including the right to free, multi-party elections. The daytrip to Gunung Kidul might have revealed the extent of the success of the New Order development program in improving the standard of living for these people, but it also revealed how very deep the accompanying program of political indoctrination had really been. His visit to Gunung Kidul a short time before the election led Herb to drastically shift his thinking about the outcome of the elections, particularly about the persistent strength of Golkar.

In recent months Herb and Lance had been persuaded that Amien Rais' party, the National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional; PAN), of which CSPS director Rizal was a senior member, would emerge as a significant force in Indonesian politics after the election, knocking out Golkar, and would form a formidable coalition with Megawati's PDI-P. In a series of lengthy interviews with news magazines in the run-up to the election, this was the position Herb took.[88] However, as a result of his discussions with the students working in the villages around Gunung Kidul about the level of resistance among people to opening themselves up to new parties and his own conversations with village heads, many of whom were senior Golkar cadres, days before the election Herb changed his position. On 3 June he wrote, 'The most likely order is Mega's PDI-[P] No. 1, Habibie's Golkar No. 2, and Amien's PAN No. 3 … Bill Liddle suggests that Amien is unlikely to be much ahead of the other two parties which look like doing well.'[89]

On 6 June, from the forty-eight parties that contested the election, a handful emerged with votes to form a coalition of power. In his predictions of the final line-up, Herb was not far from the mark; Bill Liddle was precisely on it. Megawati's party, the Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle (PDI-P), won the largest percentage of the popular vote (36.7 per cent), Golkar

came in second with 21 per cent (down from 74 per cent in 1997), followed by the Islamic-based parties PPP and Abdurrahman Wahid's PKB in third and fourth places. PAN, with only 7 per cent of the vote, was fifth. When their votes were combined, however, the parties of the leading opposition figures, Megawati, Rais and Wahid, had captured the majority.[90] Amien Rais was installed as Speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) and, in a twist still to come, although PDI-P won the most votes in the elections, PKB leader Abdurrahman Wahid would emerge with the votes from the combined houses of parliament on 20 October to be elected President, with Megawati as his deputy.

East Timor's ballot

More than twelve months earlier, in the first weeks of his presidency, in June 1998 Suharto's successor B.J. Habibie met East Timor's Archbishop Belo to discuss the difficulties in the province and possibilities for a resolution. The meeting gave some new momentum to the now seven-year-long tripartite talks between Indonesia and Portugal sponsored by the UN. Several months later, after these talks had made little progress Australian Prime Minister John Howard sent his Indonesian counterpart a letter with a proposal to resolve the East Timor problem. The proposition was that the difficulties in East Timor could be resolved in the same way a settlement had been reached in the French territory, New Caledonia, whereby it would have Special Autonomy status for a period of five to ten years before being granted independence.[91] This was not a new idea for those engaged in searching for a resolution of the situation in East Timor and many had discussed its potential, although they had all agreed that a long transition timeframe would be required.

Habibie had also expressed earlier support for the idea of

autonomy, although not in terms of eventually gaining independence from Indonesia. Consequently, he regarded the proposal as an insult, not the least because it came from Australia, which had until this point staunchly defended Indonesia's rights in East Timor under international law. East Timor and New Caledonia, Habibie argued, were nothing like each other. Indonesia was in no way comparable to France – a colonial power; he pointed out that the 1945 Constitution explicitly rejects colonialism. Moreover, he believed that an arrangement whereby a period of special autonomy was followed by independence would be a financial and political burden to which the Indonesian people would never agree.[92] What followed is recounted in great detail elsewhere.[93] In late January 1999 Habibie announced he would issue a Special Decree establishing that East Timor would have a consultative vote on whether its people wanted to remain part of the Indonesian nation with Special Autonomy status or whether they would, as Habibie later put it, 'go their separate way as a friend'.[94] One of Habibie's closest advisers and representative, his so-called right hand, was Herb's former graduate student Dewi Fortuna Anwar.[95] Dewi, a student of Indonesia's foreign policy, had discussed possible solutions in East Timor with Herb over the years, although they were often in disagreement, particularly over the timing for a push forward in negotiations.

The idea of a referendum had been much discussed by Timorese leaders over the past months. Belo, Gusmão, Ramos Horta and former Governor Mario Carrascalão all argued that a referendum was desirable in some years, perhaps even more than ten years time, but not immediately. Harold Crouch quotes Carrascalão as warning, 'If we want to hold it now, it would be suicide.'[96] In May 1999 a Tripartite Agreement between Indonesia, Portugal and the United Nations was signed and a few weeks later, on

11 June, the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) was established to oversee the vote in late August.

Since returning to Indonesia for extended periods in 1996, Herb's work with the Timor Talks campaign and his quite frequent essays on the subject had stopped. His last important essay on the topic was presented to an ANU conference he helped to organise in 1995 on peacemaking initiatives for East Timor, 'Xanana Gusmão, the Mandela role and the argument for internationally guaranteed autonomy in East Timor'. Herb was not the first to compare the East Timor guerrilla fighter, detained in Cipinang prison since his capture in 1992, with the former leader of South Africa's apartheid resistance and first post-apartheid President. The essay was another attempt to look beyond the present to what he saw as an inevitable future of freedom for East Timor. His proposal for a possible resolution was largely unchanged from the earlier Timor Talks reports; he proposed a form of special autonomy (*daerah istemewa*) with boundaries around what this meant, how far self-governing would go and so on, deliberately left unclear because, 'From the point of view of conflict resolution practice, *daerah istemewa* is attractive because of its almost complete lack of precise definition.'[97] Five years later the highly detailed proposal put before Habibie by an Australian emissary and which offended him so was precisely the kind of proposal Herb had warned against. What no one had predicted, though, was that Habibie would decide the issue needed to be settled once and for all – the East Timorese would be asked to choose Indonesia or independence.[98]

Although he was not writing about Timor, Herb followed developments in Dili and Jakarta more closely than ever through his Timorese friends in Yogyakarta. He made up his mind to go to Timor to observe the ballot, first making approaches to an

Australian-led team to join them, before deciding to go as a member of an Indonesian observer group, the Independent Committee for Monitoring Balloting (Komisi Independen Pemantau Pemungutan Suara; KIPER), which was arranging for about 300 volunteers to observe the ballot in East Timor. Even Herb was perplexed by his formerly paralysing indecision about whether to go to East Timor, most recently in 1990 at the height of *keterbukaan* when many foreigners were taking the opportunity to go. At the heart of his eventual decision to cancel his planned trip in 1990 was a concern about being permitted entry into Indonesia in the future. Since then his feelings of regret and some guilt at not going had become a burden to him. The opportunity to at last get to East Timor for the purpose of observing a vote in which its people would finally choose their own destiny, and to do so as part of a delegation of Indonesian human rights and democracy activists and intellectuals could not have been more appropriate.

Herb arrived in East Timor on 16 August, two weeks before the voting day, and was booked to leave three weeks later on 6 September. Many of his Australian colleagues and longtime collaborators on East Timor were there for the ballot, some as part of the Australia East Timor International Volunteers Project (AETIVP) led by Damien Kingsbury. Pat Walsh was part of the official delegation from the Australian government, led by former Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer. With many foreign observer groups in East Timor, Herb immediately found himself in demand as an interpreter and translator. It was in this context that he became a KIPER-endorsed adviser to the Bangkok-based group Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), which was a special project of Forum Asia, with forty-two observers from fourteen countries in Timor for the ballot. In the weeks before the vote he became a highly valued 'resource person', sharing his

long and deep knowledge of Indonesia and East Timor in briefings to the observers. On voting day, 30 August, Herb accompanied ANFREL observers as they travelled between polling stations in the countryside outside Dili.

In the months before voting day pro-integration militia had intimidated and committed acts of violence against pro-independence supporters; members of observer teams were also threatened. The early trepidations of East Timorese leaders about the implications of a process carried out so quickly were, it seemed, being borne out. Given the intimidation and violence, the success of polling day, on which 98.6 per cent of approximately 450 000 registered voters turned out, was extraordinary. By the afternoon it had become clear to those observing the poll that the majority had voted to reject Indonesia's offer of special autonomy. Timorese arrived long before the polling stations opened at 6.30am 'dressed in their Sunday best'[99] and in massive numbers. ANFREL quoted one of their observers who described the stream of voters walking down from the mountains to the Ermera polling station to cast their votes: 'What a magnificent sight! They were like ants marching down the slope, so organised flowing like lava from the crater of an erupting volcano.'[100] An ANFREL statement heralded the massive turnout alone as a success for the people of East Timor:

> The courageous act of the East Timor people to prevail over the long and difficult period of violence and intimidation prior to the poll is victory in itself. The fact that they have gone beyond and have transformed their fear and sufferings into courage and strong determination by asserting their right to express themselves … has made them emerge as a winner in the process.[101]

The day after the voting, Herb went to the Hotel Turismo, the regular meeting place for foreigners in Dili, where he spoke with Pat Walsh. Pat described Herb's response to what he had witnessed the previous day as that of someone who was awestruck and akin to his reaction to the fall of the Berlin Wall. At the Turismo Herb also met his old friend Angus McIntyre, and they arranged to meet the following day at the offices of a local NGO in West Dili. The Australians and other foreigners were there to hear Tim Fischer's briefing on the increasingly unstable security situation. As the foreigners met, militia began to burn the houses of National Council of Timorese Resistance (Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense; CNRT) leaders and sympathisers.[102]

The next day, as Angus and Herb sat talking in the NGO offices, a man appeared and implored them to help him defend his house and family from attack. The nearby house had been attacked earlier and its occupants had managed to escape, but now they had returned to assess the damage, as had men from one of the pro-Indonesia militia groups, Aitarak, led by Eurico Guterres.[103] An argument at the front of the house was set to explode into violence when Angus turned to look for Herb. He found him out the back of the house comforting a frightened elderly woman. Together they returned to the front of the house, where Herb launched a tirade against the militia. As Angus describes it, the verbal assault in fluent Indonesian from an elderly foreigner shocked the men into silence, and they eventually retreated. He recalled this story some years later for an ABC radio program about Herb, giving his reaction to his friend's courage at that moment:

> … although I was having trouble reining in my own galloping fear just for a moment, the Jewish side of Herb came into focus, thinking of him as a Jewish refugee, being a people who

had suffered persecution and being sensitive to the persecution of others, and here he was in East Timor holding the hand of this woman whose life seemed to be in danger.[104]

Herb's past anxieties about visiting Timor for fear of jeopardising his access to Indonesia and of damaging his reputation among Indonesian friends who saw his work on East Timor as folly, at best, might have dissolved in this moment. No Indonesian he knew could accept the actions committed by the militia in their name. His authority in the face of the militia resonated in his words and his language, bringing shame – if only fleetingly – on these men. Angus admits to being very frightened and astonished at Herb's bravery in what was developing into a chaotic and violent situation. The following day, a vehicle taking an Australian observer from the ANFREL team to the airport was attacked by a gang of forty Aitarak militia carrying sticks, machetes and homemade guns. The local driver was dragged from the car, punched and kicked, as was the Australian who attempted to go to his aid. On 1 September ANFREL expressed its concern that 'observers remaining in East Timor may increasingly become targets of militia reprisals and that local East Timorese staff are particularly vulnerable in this regard'.[105]

In the unstable days after the vote and before the result was announced, international leaders and the UN expressed to Habibie their concerns about the escalating violence. It was clear, however, that the Indonesian security forces had not only withdrawn from their duty to protect the people of East Timor but had also assisted in the 'carefully organised' carnage and destruction alongside the anti-independence militia.[106] As the situation in East Timor turned to chaos, communication with the rest of the archipelago became impossible. For Betty waiting in

Yogyakarta, glued to BBC radio for any news, those days were some of the most anxious and worrisome of their marriage. The first she knew that Herb was safe was when she and Lance caught sight of him on an Indonesian television report disembarking from an aeroplane at Bali's Ngurah Rai airport on 4 September, the day the results of the ballot were announced. A clear majority of East Timorese – 78.5 per cent – had rejected Habibie's offer of special autonomy and voted in favour of independence. Within hours of the announcement, militia groups launched attacks on UNAMET offices and Bishop Belo's residence and began to round people up by force for transportation to West Timor. The next day most of the remaining foreigners were forced to evacuate or were corralled in siege conditions as the campaign of violence and displacement further unfolded across East Timor.

Home

Herb arrived in Yogyakarta that evening on the last flight from Bali. As Betty told friends and family, he was 'very dazed, but gradually recovered his equilibrium over the next few days'.[107] In Indonesia public sentiment about the results of the vote was that they had been slighted and abandoned, rejected by an ungrateful younger sibling or child. Many long-time Indonesia-watchers, including Betty and Herb, drew comparisons with similar sentiments expressed by the Dutch in 1945. The reaction to the ballot result, even of NGO elites and intellectuals who had played crucial roles in opposing Suharto little more than a year earlier, was 'overwhelmingly negative' and expressed in 'a flood of wounded comment in the mainstream dailies'.[108] The response within their network in Yogyakarta was more muted; Betty commented that the attitude of her colleagues at Atma Jaya before the ballot had been 'let the Timorese decide their own future'. Yet even in these

liberal-minded circles there was a general sadness that Timor had chosen the path of separation from Indonesia and a growing sense of great shame at the destruction and violence carried out on the people of East Timor in their name. The disappointment and anger about the wasted 'sacrifices' in Timor quickly fed fear and anxiety about Indonesia's future as a sovereign nation. There was concern among the people and the major political parties that the nation would be further broken up, as other restive regions followed Timor and seceded. All Timorese in Yogyakarta were threatened, and Faustino and his family became too frightened to leave their home. As Betty explained to friends and family,

> One of the problems here is that many believe the propaganda that UNAMET was unfair. Herb was closely scrutinizing [the vote] and he says the only criticism he has to make is that the UNAMET staff were far too tolerant of the anti-independence militias! (who were of course armed). People here find it very hard to believe that the Timorese could really have voted so strongly against remaining part of Indonesia. 'Ungrateful' is the word we often hear.[109]

As it became clear that Australia would take a leading role in the intervention force planned for East Timor, the Indonesian Government suspended the 1995 Australia–Indonesia Security Agreement and anti-Australian rhetoric gained momentum in the media. Indonesians looked for a scapegoat, making Australia a target. The leader of the ACICIS program, David Reeve, grew increasingly concerned about the welfare of a group of forty or so newly arrived Australian students and made plans with UGM Rector Ichlasul Amal to house them in the relatively safe Bulak Sumur complex, with Herb and Betty if necessary.

On his return from Dili, Herb was invited to speak to his UGM colleagues about the ballot and his experience in East Timor. On 10 September Herb addressed a gathering in the Faculty of Social Science and Politics. His opening few sentences left no one in doubt as to the tone and message of his talk: 'I was given the title "Cerita dari Timor Timur" (Story from East Timor). But the story I want to tell you is a truly horrible one. So perhaps I need another title, like "East Timor Disaster 1999". Or perhaps "The Destruction of East Timor".'[110]

Herb began with a long view of the tragedy unfolding in East Timor: 'In 1975 East Timor became a victim of the Cold War.' However, this historical framing did not mean that he was any less precise about the identities of the perpetrators and masters of the terror acted out on the people of East Timor since Habibie had announced the prospect of a popular vote on its future nine months earlier. He detailed the ways the formation of the pro-integration militia as early as April went unchecked by security forces, as did intimidating violence, including the murders of pro-independence supporters. Of the perpetrators Herb told his audience, 'the militia were assisted directly by various functionaries of the army and police, including groups of people who were known in East Timor as Kopassus [Special Forces]'.[111] He stressed that their involvement could not be explained by theories of a fractured or weak military and security apparatus in Timor, but that it 'was a strategy that was organised before the vote and carried out systematically'. At the same time as Herb was presenting his analysis at UGM, UNAMET staffers, foreign observers, journalists and military analysts, were making the same conclusions in reports and press statements beamed around the world.

This was not the sort of analysis that was widely heard inside Indonesia in the weeks after the ballot results were announced,

however; nor indeed was it the sort of analysis that Indonesian audiences were willing to listen to. In a survey published on 12 October 1999 in the Yogyakarta daily *Bernas* with the title 'Interfet not yet a Peacekeeping Force', in response to the question 'In your opinion which actors have carried out the most brutal level of violence in East Timor?' 44 per cent of respondents answered International Force for East Timor (INTERFET), 23 per cent chose the Timorese pro-independence party, CNRT, 14 per cent TNI, 13 per cent the militia and the remaining 6 per cent said they did not know. In answer to a further question on the need for INTERFET in East Timor, 65 per cent of respondents believed its presence to be unnecessary. At the same time, however, a significant majority of respondents agreed that the actions of the TNI before the popular vote in East Timor were either 'not good' (24 per cent), or 'caused problems' (42 per cent). The government news service, Antara, led the local reporting condemning the Australian troops in East Timor, accusing them of human rights violations. Mobs protested outside the Australian Embassy in Jakarta,[112] and presidential representative Dewi Fortuna Anwar lambasted Australia for its 'macho language' about Indonesia, accusing it of 'behaving like the Godfather of East Timor'. She warned that Australia may be heading for a 'quagmire' in East Timor.[113] Attempts by concerned Indonesians to protest against their government's actions in East Timor were suppressed. In a protest against the declaration of a state of emergency in Timor on 15 September, journalist and publisher Goenawan Mohamad was interrogated. Other Indonesians supportive of the Timorese, who were actively and courageously helping them in Indonesia and in East Timor, were closely monitored by security agencies.

As the anti-INTERFET and anti-Australian campaign mobilised over the weeks after INTERFET's arrival on 20 Sept-

ember, Herb and Betty remained sure that they were safe: 'We are not concerned for ourselves; people treat us as always – friendly and relaxed.'[114] Their concerns were primarily for Faus and his family and other East Timorese friends in Indonesia who knew very little of their relatives and friends in East Timor and feared greatly for them. Faus and his wife Leni eventually heard that some of their relatives had simply disappeared without trace, whereas other missing family members were found safe in Darwin.

In the period of a little more than a year since the fall of Suharto, Indonesia had not fulfilled the expectations of *reformasi*, which for many meant freedom and peace. In addition to the state-sanctioned violence in East Timor since early 1999, bloody conflict between local ethnic and religious communities had broken out in the provinces of Maluku and West Kalimantan.[115] Herb launched into his teaching at CSPS for the November–December term with a range of seminars dealing with the many areas of conflict, violence and possibilities for peace in Indonesia at this time. His seminars included coverage of the role of the Indonesian armed forces in East Timor, ethnic and religious conflict since 1966, global economic conflict and the dilemmas facing the countries of the South, foreign intervention in East Timor and Kosovo, and UN reform. Herb continued to give interviews to journalists on these and other issues related to the politics of reform in Indonesia.

The election of Abdurrahman Wahid as President in October and Megawati as Vice-President meant that the leadership constellation he and many others had long wished for had come into power, although the distribution of authority between the two was somewhat surprising. He had long admired Wahid and counted him as a friend. In the months to come, as it became clear that the presidential partnership was not a workable one and Wahid's

unorthodox leadership methods came into question, Herb joined those commentators who supported the idea that Indonesia might benefit from the appointment of a First Minister.[116]

Another page

By the end of 1999, after several unsettling months in the wake of the Timor ballot, Betty had decided that she was ready to return to Melbourne permanently to be closer to her children and grandchildren. Herb's final months in Yogyakarta teaching without Betty were difficult, and he too realised that this would be his last extended period of living in Indonesia. Before leaving, he distributed a large number of his books to several libraries around Yogyakarta, including Saint Ignatius College and the Centre for Population Studies.[117]

As in 1957, returning to Melbourne from Indonesia brought a sense of longing and homesickness and some sense of displacement. Having decided to return, the most pronounced difficulty was to establish once again a pattern of daily life and a routine that was as satisfying and rewarding as the life he had enjoyed for the preceding four years. Betty resumed her voluntary work at the Australian Council of Churches two days a week, and together they did yoga and rejoiced in their grandchildren. Herb cycled, jogged and attended occasional Quaker meetings; but his transition to new work and causes was less apparent, and he was apprehensive about reconnecting with his academic networks. Although his old friends at Monash, including John Legge, who was happy to act as his 'supervisor' for any new writing project, were supportive and active as ever in their weekly seminars and lunches together, friends from the activist world, particularly Pat Walsh, were no longer around. Pat was now in Timor heading the newly established Commission for Reception, Truth and

Reconciliation (CAVR). In July 2000 Herb wrote to his oldest friend, Jim Lawler, now retired from his academic position in Paris. Herb explained to Jim that he was unsure about where to focus his energies:

> How important is it to push oneself with regard to disciplined achievement-oriented activity? At what point should one let go … how determined should I be to be involved in the world of political activism. Some of the best periods of my life have been when I have found a way of responding to urgent needs in faraway places, and especially when I have found forms of activism to which my scholarly skills are relevant. But I can't always find a niche like that.[118]

The reality was that it was not long before Herb was swept back into what was then a strengthening Indonesia-focused community in Melbourne, with students from Indonesia flocking to its universities in increasing numbers and a vibrant and active group of Indonesia scholars. Their ranks were boosted by the arrival at Melbourne University of Arief Budiman and Ariel Heryanto who had left Satya Wacana Christian University following the conflicts with its senior establishment in the mid-1990s.[119] Because of his high-profile role in the disputes, Arief Budiman was dishonourably discharged, but kept in limbo for some years as academic and general staff protested and demanded his reinstatement. Like George Aditjondro, he eventually took up a position overseas, joining Melbourne University in 1997.

Arief was the older brother of Soe Hok Gie and an old friend of Herb. In recent years they had discussed the possibility of collaborating on one of Herb's long-planned projects, a book of autobiographical reflections by Indonesian intellectuals and foreign

Indonesianists. In late 2000, after some months of readjustment and resettling, Herb, who was still very keen to teach, accepted an invitation from Arief to take a seminar course with his honours students on 'Indonesia and Australia in Global Society' in the first semester of 2001. In the process of finding his niche again, Herb also reconnected with ACFOA as a member of its Indonesia Think Tank Group, assisting with the difficult task of working out how to approach its work in Indonesia, particularly in West Papua, given the tense relations between the two countries since the East Timor ballot.

Teaching his small honours class allowed Herb to adapt the course syllabus he had developed for Indonesian students over the past four years for Australian students. A combination of his weekly seminars on topics that regularly touched on the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Australia and his work with the ACFOA think tank meant that by mid-2001 Herb was entirely re-engaged with the Australian political scene, especially with issues relating to its regional and international concerns. As he had been through many decades of engagement on these issues, Herb was preoccupied with the question of what Indonesianists should be saying to the Australian public about the future of that country, its fledgling democracy and about two topics that were particularly alarming for Australians, its potentially fragmentary edges, Aceh and Papua.

Battles to fight: Timor, terrorism, *Tampa*

> I read somewhere recently that people are peaceminded who prefer thinking in threes to thinking in twos. Interesting, isn't it?
>
> Herb Feith, email correspondence, November 2001[120]

As Herb explained to Jim Lawler a year earlier, he felt most fulfilled when he found a way to match his scholarly skills with an urgent need for activism. The international crises and political conflicts in the latter half of 2001 had history-changing implications for relations within the Asia–Pacific region, which called for the combination of his scholarly skills and activist inclinations in ways that they had been many times before in his long career.

Herb planned to return to Yogyakarta to teach a four-week course at the CSPS in October and to spend a week in Jakarta, coinciding with the launch of a photographic exhibition to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Volunteer Graduate Scheme in Indonesia at which he was to be the star guest. The attacks on the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington on 11 September 2001, just a few weeks before his trip, shifted the focus of the rest of his schedule. He was asked to prepare a paper for a seminar at CSPS on the issues arising from the attacks of 11 September, the potential US responses and their implications for the Muslim world.

At the time of the attacks, Indonesia was about to install its third President in three years. Abdurrahman Wahid's presidency had been characterised by an esoteric style of management which failed to maintain the coalition of parties that had elected him President less than two years earlier. Since then violent conflict taking several forms had continued in various parts of the archipelago and Indonesians had grown frustrated with the slow pace of political reform. Wahid was ousted from the presidency by unanimous vote of the MPR on 23 July 2001, and his deputy and rival Megawati Sukarnoputri was appointed in his place.

In one of the first and most decisive foreign policy moves of her term as President, Megawati took the opportunity of an already planned trip to Washington to condemn the terror

attacks and offer her government's support to the Americans. Herb's position was similar to that of his friends in Indonesia. He condemned the attacks as reprehensible and horrifying acts of violence against civilians, but he also, like British commentator Jonathan Power and American Palestinian Edward Said, warned against American unilateral action. Herb shared their view that acting in anger would severely damage the legitimacy of the United States, which was already diminished in countries like Indonesia. The message against acting in anger was one that Herb conveyed to some American friends, from whom, as he put to them bluntly, he had expected more insight into the implications of retaliatory actions in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the Muslim world.[121] In his presentation to the seminar in Yogyakarta, Herb pursued the argument that, because the US had a legitimacy deficit, it was not in the position it had been fifty years ago after the bombing of Pearl Harbor; more importantly, the international system had changed dramatically since then.[122] Unilateral action, such as targeting Iraq and Afghanistan, violated the now normative regulative ideal in international relations of good international citizenship, and consequently the standing of the US would diminish and it would become a global pariah. Herb asked his audience to consider instead a situation in which the US saw opportunity in this crisis, whereby the 'doves' in the US administration sought to 'learn from the terrorist attack' and examine the reasons for their legitimacy deficit in the first place. The idea of the US taking its war against terror to Iraq and Afghanistan was to him illogical and destined to create further and deeper enemies and animosities, not only in these places but also right through the non-Western world, especially the Muslim parts of it.[123]

Australian politics were embroiled in their own anxieties about invasion at the time of the terrorist attacks in the US – not

in the form of men using aeroplanes as bombs, but of stateless men, women and children on rickety boats in search of asylum. For many Australians like Herb and Betty Feith who welcomed refugees into their home, this was a time of deep concern about the state of Australia as a tolerant and equitable nation. Two weeks earlier, on 26 August 2001, MV *Tampa*, a Norwegian ship en route from Perth to Singapore, responded to calls from the Australian coastguard to help a wooden boat in distress in the Indian Ocean.[124] When the *Tampa* located the boat it was seventy-five nautical miles from Christmas Island, technically in the Indonesian maritime zone. The crew rescued 433 people from the broken vessel, accommodating them on the open deck of the *Tampa*, and were then directed by the Australian coastguard to deliver them to the Indonesian port of Merak. When the asylum seekers demanded they return to Christmas Island, such was their desperation that the captain turned back, only to be refused entry. The *Tampa* remained in waters off Christmas Island for the next eight days until conditions on the ship became such that the *Tampa*'s captain felt compelled to defy the coastguard's orders and entered Australian territory.

The politics of anxiety and xenophobia gripped Australia that week. As journalist Peter Mares explains it, there was an 'election in the wind' and Prime Minister Howard's tough stance on the asylum seekers met with popular approval: 'When John Howard put his foot down and said "keep out!" the people of Australia roared their collective approval.'[125] The asylum seekers were labelled 'queue-jumpers' by both sides of politics as the government cobbled together its 'Pacific Solution' of offshore detention centres in the cash-strapped island state of Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Little over a month later, the so-called Children Overboard

Affair, in which the government claimed that children had been thrown off a boat as Australian officials attempted to turn it away from Australian waters, provided, some commentators believed, the Howard Government with the final push over the line. As Mares puts it, 'The Australian tendency to panic at the sight of a boat on the horizon had helped to deliver John Howard a third term in office.'[126]

On 2 November, a day before his seventy-first birthday, Herb was in Jakarta to launch the photographic exhibition documenting and marking fifty years of Australian volunteers in Indonesia. The 'three Ts of Australia's regional policy', as he called them, were on his mind – Timor, terrorism and *Tampa*[127] – and he was somewhat fearful of the turn Australian and international politics had taken and was rallying for a new fight. Never one to pass up an opportunity to impart a message when he had a captive audience, he made no exception on this occasion. Herb began with warm greetings to his many old friends, both Australian and Indonesian, but this was to be no nostalgic walk down memory lane. Herb's most pertinent comments were not specifically about Australia's relations with Indonesia but about the state of Australia itself:

> Looking at Australia today, it's certainly a lot more multicultural country than it was when our fifties group of volunteers came here, and it's a country which engages Asia in far more ways. But it's still a country in which first-world parochialism is a very powerful force. Australians who see themselves as citizens of a planet are still a pretty small minority, and that's become painfully clear to us, particularly recently over the asylum-seekers issue, over the people coming in tiny boats from long distances, and ultimately from places like Iraq and Afghanistan. And of course it's become clear to

> us as a result of the events of September the 11th in New York and Washington. The 'all the way with the USA' responses that have been so dominant in Australia have given all of us a great deal to ponder about and indeed a great deal to be anxious about. So those of us who believe in solidarity with Asians and people in other third-world countries still have an awful lot of battles to fight. But it's a happy thing that we've been empowered in relation to those battles by a lot of very valuable Indonesian friendships.[128]

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During his week in Jakarta Herb paid visits to many friends, including Daniel Dhakidae and Parakiri T. Simbolon at Gramedia Publishers, with whom he discussed his Indonesian intellectuals book project, which he had given the working title 'Tokoh dan Teman zaman Soekarno' ('Elite figures and friends from the Sukarno era'). Simbolon was interested in the book and told Herb on the spot that if he wrote it, he would publish it. Herb also raised with his friend the possibility of publishing translations of Richard Falk's *Reimagining the Future* and Elise Boulding's *Underside of History*, leaving his personal copy of the latter, a quite hefty tome, with Simbolon. Inside was a note saying that he would be back in February and would pick it up then.[129]

As he traversed Jakarta on trains and buses, Herb frequently arrived at his appointments in need of a characteristic 'quick lie down' before emerging ten minutes later ready to engage fully and ask probing questions. Herb stayed with Harold Crouch, who was working with the International Crisis Group, and with whom he had stayed during a short and relaxed trip in January. The month of teaching and catching up with people in Yogyakarta and Jakarta

and his 'star turn' at the volunteer reunion event made for a hectic and taxing schedule. Friends noticed his fading hearing, and his requests that the air-conditioning be used in the apartment and car struck his host as unusual for a guest who normally flung windows open and complained about the artificially cooled air.

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Herb arrived home in Melbourne on 8 November and resumed his range of activities at the universities and continued his debate with friends over email. On the morning of Thursday, 15 November he cycled out to Monash to meet John Legge at his office in the Menzies building. As they had done so many times over the years, John wanted Herb's input on a book he was working on. They stopped to have lunch at the University Club with an old friend, historian Wang Gungwu, who was visiting from Singapore. Over lunch Herb quizzed Gungwu about the Falun Gong, although neither was an expert on it, but about which Herb was deeply concerned in the context of freedom of religious faith and practice; they discussed the reasons for China's great anxiety about the religious group.[130]

After lunch, Herb and John continued their discussions, and by the time Herb left Monash it was around 3pm. He had planned to stop off to visit an old friend, Stella Mitchell, in East Malvern, more or less on his way home. Stella had worked with Herb's cousin Edith in the Allied Reconstruction Authority in Germany after the war, and they had both later come to live in Australia. Herb had not let Stella know to expect him that afternoon, so she was not home when he arrived. He left a note and continued on his journey along Malvern Road towards Glen Iris. By this time it was peak hour for traffic, and the roads he took were

busy. Herb had cycled the twelve kilometres or so to and from the Clayton campus many times a week for thirty years. When visiting Indonesian friends and others, like Andreas Susanto, a doctoral student from Yogyakarta who boarded in the Nuthouse earlier that year, cycled with him on this route he was particularly firm about safety.

His journey that day from Clayton to High Street, Glen Iris, with a short stop at Stella's in East Malvern, had taken more than two hours – it normally took him about half that. Even with a stop at Stella's for long enough to write her a note, it had been a very slow ride home. The day before, Herb had put his bike on the train and cycled from the city to Melbourne University for a seminar there. This, however, was his first cycle out to Monash since returning from Indonesia, where it is doubtful he rode far, if at all.

Herb approached the High Street railway crossing adjacent to Glen Iris station via a side street, as he had done countless times. The 6.15pm Glen Waverley-bound train had just disembarked its passengers and was pulling out of the station at slow speed across the level crossing. At almost the same time a city-bound train was approaching the station. It was running one or two minutes behind its schedule and travelling express from Darling to Richmond station at eighty kilometres an hour, the track speed limit. Passengers on the platform heard the train's horn sound repeatedly and noticed that the crossing lights and bells were operating and the boom gates lowered.

Betty was expecting Herb in time for dinner at about 6.30pm. He had told her that morning that he would visit Stella on his way home. When he was not home by 7pm she became concerned as he normally telephoned if he was delayed. Betty called Stella, who told her that she had missed Herb when he dropped in. She then

telephoned Annie, who had recently moved back to Melbourne and lived close by, then the police, who arrived just minutes later with Annie following.

Herb had waited for the Glen Waverley-bound train to leave the station before passing between the lowered boom gates and entering the crossing. The driver of the city-bound express train had caught sight of a cyclist approaching the crossing and sounded his alarms. Just before the High Street crossing there is a slight curve in the tracks, which restricted the driver's view until the train was almost upon the crossing, at which point he applied his brakes. Several of the newly disembarked passengers saw a cyclist ride very slowly on to the tracks, seemingly not hearing and unaware of the train horn sounding.

Requiem

HERB FEITH'S DEATH was covered by all of Indonesia's major national newspapers. The timing of his death, just after 6pm Melbourne time (3pm in Jakarta), meant that it was included in the next morning's Indonesian newspapers, including national dailies *Kompas*, *Jakarta Post*, *Suara Pembaruan* and *Tempo.com* (which included three separate pieces), and on some of their websites that evening. In contrast, the timing meant that Herb's accidental death was not covered the next day in the city in which it occurred; Melbourne's *Age* and *Herald Sun* did not carry a story naming him until Saturday, two days after it happened. *The Age* included a quotation about Herb published the previous day in the *Jakarta Post*. The timing and nature of his death, together with his often longstanding personal relationships with many working for these Indonesian publications, partly explain the considerable and immediate coverage given to it. Nonetheless,

the extent of the coverage was extraordinary for any scholar, let alone a foreign one.

On 21 November a crowd of family and friends gathered in Melbourne for Herb's funeral, filling the multifaith Religious Centre at Monash; in Yogyakarta and in Dili, friends came together to remember him with prayers, stories and music. In Dili, a ceremony organised by Pat Walsh and others was held in the small Xanana Gusmão Reading Room at which Xanana himself, whom Herb never met, his wife Kirsty Sword Gusmão and others paid tribute to an old friend of the East Timorese. In Yogyakarta his students and friends organised a ceremony in which his bicycle sat on a makeshift altar. The memorial organised by Hélène and Gerry van Klinken and others was attended by many from Herb's wide Yogyakarta family, including members of his *keluarga desa* from Pendoworedjo and the Australian Ambassador, Richard Smith, who came from Jakarta to pay his respects. Pak Kromo's grandson, Subardiano, told the gathering: 'We didn't even know Pak Herb was in fact a renowned academic until we read about his death in the newspaper.'[1] In Jakarta a few weeks later another gathering of old friends including Arief Budiman, Juwono Sudarsono, Marsillam Simanjuntak, Dewi Fortuna Anwar and Harold Crouch at the National Library celebrated Herb's life and influence. Wherever these ceremonies took place, people remembered their friend's limitless generosity, sharp intellect and deep connection with Indonesia and concern for all humanity. His friends and admirers also shared their stories and tributes to Herb in the more than twenty obituaries published in national newspapers, magazines and radio programs in Australia and Indonesia.[2]

Herb left bits and pieces of ephemera behind in various places in Yogyakarta – unfinished thought pieces on the hard drive of Samsuri's computer and boxes of 'who knows what' at the van

Klinkens' place. As always, he had planned to be back again soon. A few months after Herb's death, in recognition of his contribution and foundational role in forging a now deep and complex engagement between Indonesians and Australians, not only between scholars and students but also among ordinary people in both countries, the Australian Indonesian Institute announced it would offer a Herb Feith Scholarship for students to join the Masters Program at the Centre of Security and Peace Studies at UGM. These scholarships were later taken over by the Herb Feith Foundation, set up by Herb's friends and former colleagues, and formally established with the Council of Monash University in 2003.

Australian Indonesianist Anthony Reid and Indonesian journalist and writer Goenawan Mohamad engaged in a dialogue by email as they shared their grief at Herb's sudden passing. It was Reid's heartfelt tribute to Herb relayed from Los Angeles on an email list for Indonesianists that Mohamad picked up when preparing his weekly *Tempo* column, which he devoted to Herb.[3] Both men were Herb's old friends and students of his work; they commented on Herb and his approach to Indonesia as the focus of his work, but also on so much more. In his email posting Reid wrote,

> He seemed to know everybody worth knowing in Indonesia and what's more to be loved by them in a way that opened every door … he gave an ethical quality to the whole Indonesia/Australia (or north-south, as we now say) relationship which made it seem perfectly right that we were as committed to this project as they were. The huge and growing differences of wealth, education, and perspective seemed minor in light of his self-forgetting passion. Of course these

> differences weren't really minor, and most of us couldn't really overcome them especially in later years. But I am sure that whenever I was in 'the field' I had the model of Herb in my brain as the way it morally could and should be done.[4]

Goenawan Mohamad included a part of Reid's testimony in his column and then went on to write,

> The ethical character and spirit of selflessness – which did not formulate 'the Other' as something captured in the knowledge of 'the Self' – is not something that can be readily obtained and achieved. Social sciences (particularly the humanities) are not an easy scientific process, because they always exist within various ambivalences and tensions. There is always a problem between 'knowing' and 'mastering', between 'detachment' and ambivalence', between 'relativism' and 'anti-relativism'.[5]

Reid and Mohamad agreed that Herb was a rare example of someone who brought such a level of selflessness to his work. Their tributes to Herb Feith's ethical character, his morality and its influence, both on them and on the study of Indonesia, mirrored the sentiments of many others among his colleagues. Following Herb's ethical and moral model, although it was increasingly difficult to replicate personally and professionally within the institutions and disciplines in which they worked and the world in which they lived, was an ever-present challenge. It was a provocative model – a model of scholarly engagement worth striving for.

Notes

Introduction

1 Lee, *Virginia Woolf's Nose*, p. 118.
2 Mohamad, 'Herb'.
3 Feith, 'Herb Feith', in Bretherton, *Peace Studies in Australia and New Zealand*, pp. 9–10.
4 Aspinall & Fealy, *Soeharto's New Order and Its Legacy*.
5 Feith, 'A syncretistic Jew'.
6 Kleinman, *What Really Matters*, p. 25.

1 Childhood (1930–45)

1 Herb Feith, interview with Rob Feith, c1989, original transcript.
2 Arthur Feith to 'Kyarrans', 10 August 1977, Herb Feith Papers, National Library of Australia [hereafter HF Papers, NLA], MS 9926/1/2.
3 See Bartrop (*Australia and the Holocaust 1933–45*, pp. 79–106) for further information about Form 47 and the 'Jewish clauses' used by bureaucrats to determine which Jews were from Eastern Europe and which were from the West.
4 Hansard, 21 September 1938, p. 11.
5 Hansard, 1 December 1938, p. 2535.
6 Hansard, 30 November & 1 December 1938, pp. 2535–6.
7 Hansard, Senate, 12 October 1938.
8 Bartrop, *Australia and the Holocaust 1933–45*, pp. 76–7.
9 Langmore, 'Duncan, Ada Constance (1896–1970)'.
10 Re, 'Moore, Sir William Harrison (1867–1935)'.
11 Gillison, *A History of the Lyceum Club Melbourne*.
12 Edith Harrison Moore Papers, Melbourne University Archive [hereafter EHM Papers], A.1963.0009/1–4, n.d.
13 7 April 1933, EHM papers.
14 EHM Papers.
15 Hansard, 22 November 1938, pp. 1851–2.
16 Arthur Feith, interview by David Feith and Karen Coffield, January 1984, Melbourne, transcript of original recording.
17 Kraus, *In These Great Times*, p. 15.
18 Arthur Feith, interview by David Feith & Karen Coffield.
19 Ibid.
20 'The problem of Europe's refugees: How they are fitting into the new home which Australia offers', *Listener-In*, 2–8 September 1939, p. 10, EHM papers.
21 Ibid.

22 Levi, *My Dear Friends*; Graff, Turnbull, Baskin et al., *A Time to Keep*.
23 Rutland, *The Jews in Australia*, p. 94; Graff, Turnbull, Baskin et al., *A Time to Keep*, pp. 28–48.
24 Feith, 'A syncretistic Jew'.
25 Ibid.
26 Arthur Feith to HF, 26 January 1958, HF Papers, Monash University Archives, MON 78 (hereafter HF Papers, Monash).
27 In addition to his cousin Edith who escaped to London in late 1938, other cousins, uncles and aunts managed to escape Nazi-occupied Vienna, through Switzerland and on to Paris and the south of France, and another to South America.
28 Arthur Feith to HF, 23 May 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
29 Arthur Feith to HF, 9 May 1960, HF Papers, Monash.

2 Youth (1945–51)

1 HF to Betty Evans, Christmas Day 1950, HF Papers, Monash.
2 Arthur Feith to Lady Harrison Moore, 20 December 1945, EHM Papers.
3 Feith, 'How Asia changed me'.
4 Lily Feith to HF, 20 September 1952, HF Papers, Monash, translated from German original.
5 Arthur Feith to HF, 16 November 1955, HF Papers, Monash.
6 Gollancz, *Our Threatened Values*, p. 83.
7 Feith, 'Letters from Europe' (pamphlet).
8 Taylor, *Indonesia*, p. 331.
9 Parrott, 'Who killed Brigadier Mallaby?'
10 Vickers, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, p. 111.
11 Dorling, *Diplomasi*, p. xi.
12 Bennett, *The Return of the Exiles*, pp. 4, 81.
13 Waters, *The Empire Fractures*, p. 9.
14 Ryan, 'Ball, William Macmahon (1901–1986)', pp. 51–3.
15 Isaac, 'The Macmahon Ball mission', p. 21.
16 Dorling, *Diplomasi*, p. xiii.
17 Ibid., p. xiv.
18 Bennett, *The Return of the Exiles*.
19 Camilleri & Teichmann, *Security and Survival*, p. 70.
20 Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, p. 214; *Argus*, 25 July 1947.
21 Bondan, *Spanning a Revolution*, pp. 235–46.
22 Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, p. 215.
23 Ibid., p. 216.
24 Betty Evans to HF, 14 June 1953, HF Papers, Monash.
25 Don Anderson, interview with author, Canberra, February 2006. The SCM was highly political in the sense that it encouraged its members to become involved. For example, Alan Hunt later became a federal government minister. Quite a number of its members would have been involved in political parties, the majority in the ALP.
26 Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, pp. 333–6.
27 Ibid., pp. 339–44.
28 Burton, 'Indonesia: Unfinished diplomacy', p. 112.
29 Dorling & Lee, *Australia and Indonesia's Independence*, p. xiv.
30 Brawley, *The White Peril*, p. 252.
31 Burton, 'Indonesia: Unfinished diplomacy', p. 38.
32 Lowe & Oakman, *Australia and the Colombo Plan*.
33 Stuart, letter to Burton, 11 June 1948.
34 Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, p. 52.
35 Ball, 7 June 1948.
36 Ball, 'Report on a mission to East Asia, May 27–Jul 6 1948'.
37 Calwell, cabinet submission, 31 March 1949.
38 Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*, p. 205.
39 Tavan, *The Long, Slow Death of White Australia*, pp. 84–5. Alexander Downer (senior) is father of Alexander Downer (junior), Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Howard Government, 1996–2007.
40 *Wyvern*, 'Report on Ball lecture', p. 23.
41 Gregory, 'Teaching and learning'.

42 Hastings, *The Road to Lembang*, p. 6.
43 Ibid., p. 9.
44 Wilkie, 'Even their cities are confused' and 'Food … for thought in Jakarta', 6–7 March 1950.
45 HF, interview by Rob Feith, Yogyakarta, c1997, transcript of the original.
46 Feith, 'Molly Bondan', pp. 8–9.
47 Bayly quoted by Feith, B., 'Putting in a stitch or two', p. 2.
48 Feith, B., 'Putting in a stitch or two', p. 2.
49 HF, interview by Rob Feith, Yogyakarta, c. 1997, transcript of original.
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51 Ball to Vern Bailey, 8 December 1950, W. Macmahon Ball Papers, NLA, MS 7851/1/3.
52 John Bayly to Dr Mohammad Rum, Minister for Internal Affairs, 14 December 1950, W. Macmahon Ball Papers, NLA, MS 7851/1/3.
53 Vern Bailey to Macmahon Ball, 26 December 1950, W. Macmahon Ball Papers, NLA, MS 7851/1/3.
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8 Ibid.
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11 Ibid.
12 Feith, *The Wilopo Cabinet*, pp. 3, 6.
13 Ibid., p. 17.
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23 Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 103.
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26 Ibid.
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4 Engaging Indonesia (1953–56)

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95 Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 438.
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5 Cornell years (1957–60)

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4 Ibid., p. 470; Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 288.
5 Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy.*
6 Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 580.
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10 HF (Yogyakarta) to Betty, Arthur, Lily Feith and Lotte, 30 May 1957, HF Papers, Monash.
11 Ibid.
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13 Ibid.
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18 Feith, 'Indonesia', p. 244.
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25 Kahin (ed.), *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, p. vi.
26 In Kahin's Preface to the 1964 edition of *Governments* these reservations had lessened due, he wrote, to the now healthy and growing body of scholarship on the political development of Southeast Asian countries, bringing the study itself to a position whereby 'the monographic base which is now emerging is sufficient to warrant some at least tentative comparative assessments' (1964, pp. v–vi) of some aspects of politics in the region.
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30 Lev & Lev, 'In memoriam: Soemarsaid Moertono, 1922–1987', pp. 141–2.
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32 HF to Arthur and Lily Feith, 6 October 1957, HF Papers, Monash.
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35 Pye, Review of *Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, pp. 188–9.
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41 Geertz (Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, California) to HF (Ithaca), 13 January 1959, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 1002.
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46 Lev, *The Transition to Guided Democracy*, ch. 6.
47 Mackie, 'Inflation and confrontation in Indonesia', pp. 82–7.
48 Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia*, p. 17.
49 Alderton, 'The changing nature of the ban on alien retail trade activities in rural Indonesia between May and November 1959', p. 5.
50 Mohamad, 'Sebuah Catatan Lain', p. 33.
51 Somers, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia*, p. 26.
52 Arthur Feith to HF, 20 November 1959, HF Papers, Monash.
53 Feith, 'Persecution in Indonesia'.
54 HF to Arthur and Lily Feith, 27 December 1959, HF Papers, Monash.
55 Arthur Feith to HF, 10 January 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
56 Dave Wilson (UCLA) to HF, 13 January 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
57 Geertz to HF, 6 May 1960, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 1002.
58 Lily Feith to HF, 17 January 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
59 McVey, review of *The Wilopo Cabinet*, p. 412.
60 HF to Geertz, 1 July 1960, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 1002.
61 Geertz to HF, 6 May 1960, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 1002.
62 HF to Soedjatmoko (Jakarta), 27 Aug 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
63 Tipps, 'Modernization theory and the comparative study of societies'.
64 HF to S.N. Eisenstadt, 1 October 1960, HF Papers, Monash.
65 Eisenstadt, 'Changes in patterns of stratification attendant on attainment of political independence'; Pye, *The Spirit of Burmese Politics*.
66 Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. 608.
67 Ibid., p. 604.
68 McVey, review of *The Wilopo Cabinet*, p. 412.
69 Kahin, foreword to Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, p. ix.
70 Tipps, 'Modernization theory and the comparative study of societies', p. 208.
71 Herb to Kahin, 27 April 1961, Kahin Papers.

6 Young scholar at work (1961–65)

1 Feith, 'New Guinea'; 'Nasution's probe'; 'Robert Kennedy's traces in New Guinea'; HF (Canberra) to Charles Meeking, 22 August 1961, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 996.
2 Feith, 'Nasution's probe'.
3 Ibid.
4 HF to 'Canberrans and Melburnians', 31 August & 4 September 1961, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 996.
5 HF (Jakarta) to Betty, Arthur, Lily Feith and Lotte, 26 October 1961, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 996.
6 As Sukarno's biographer John Legge put it, 'Sukarno's lack of understanding of economic questions was monumental' (Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 331).
7 Mackie, 'Inflation and confrontation in Indonesia', p. 290.
8 Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 330.
9 HF to Nugroho Notosusanto, 11 March 1962, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 1328.
10 Feith & Lev, 'The end of the Indonesian rebellion'.
11 McVey, *Indonesia*, p. iv.
12 Feith, 'Dynamics of guided democracy', pp. 309, 397.
13 Ibid., p. 390.
14 Ibid., pp. 408–9.
15 HF to Kahin, 29 October 1963, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
16 HF to Kahin, 11 March 1962, Kahin Papers, Box 16.
17 Paauw, 'From colonial to guided economy'.
18 Ruth McVey to HF, 1 August 1962, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 952.
19 Feith, *The Decline of Constitutional Democracy in Indonesia*, pp. 509–10.
20 Roselan Abdulgani to HF, 25 July 1963, Kahin Papers, Box 6.
21 HF to Kahin, 29 October 1963, HF

Papers, Monash, Folder 198
22 Anderson, 'Perspective and method in American research on Indonesia', p. 125.
23 HF to Kahin, 29 October 1963, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
24 Lance Castles was in Jakarta as a volunteer, 1960–63, and Mary Johnson in Solo, 1963–65,
25 Feith, 'Dynamics of guided democracy', pp. 82, 91.
26 HF to Kahin, 2 February 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
27 HF to Geertz, 27 November 1963, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 190. Willard A. Hanna was a former US State Department employee, serving during the 1940s and '50s in Manila; Jakarta, Indonesia and Tokyo, where he worked as an information officer. He went on to work for the American Universities Field Staff in various countries in Southeast Asia.
28 Anderson, 'Review of decline of constitutional democracy', pp. 218–19.
29 Letter Herb (in Jakarta, c/o Selo Soemardjan) to Kahin, 16 January 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
30 Feith, 'President Soekarno, the army and the communists', p. 980.
31 Ibid., p. 979.
32 HF to Kahin, 23 May 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
33 HF to Richard Tanter, 8 October 1996, NLA, MS 9926/2.
34 HF to Geertz, 4 June 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 190.
35 Onghokham to HF, 23 December 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198. In his interview with the author in 2005 Onghokham countered this in his retrospective observation that Herb got it right in that article.
36 HF to Dan Lev, 22 January 1965, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 199.
37 Anderson, 'Perspective and method in American research on Indonesia', p. 125.
38 HF to Dan Lev, 15 February 1965, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 199.
39 HF to Dan Lev, 9 September 1964, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 199.
40 Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 327.
41 Feith, 'Visit to West Irian: Frank speaking by Papuans and Indonesians', pp. 7–8.
42 Haskell, *Objectivity is Not Neutrality.*
43 For analysis of the debate, see Cribb, 'The historical roots of Indonesia's New Order', p. 68.
44 Benda, 'Democracy in Indonesia', pp. 450, 250.
45 Feith, 'History, theory and Indonesian politics', p. 308.
46 Benda and Feith respected each other's intellect and passion for their subject – Indonesia – however different their approaches might have been. In March 1964 Feith was invited, at Benda's instigation, to take up a two-year appointment at Yale's Department of Political Science.
47 Feith, 'Some political dilemmas of Indonesian intellectuals'. Reportage of the paper appeared in *Canberra Times*, 20 August 1964, and *SMH*, 20 August 1964.
48 Feith, 'Some political dilemmas of Indonesian intellectuals'.
49 Feith, review of *Political Change in Underdeveloped Countries*, p. 217.
50 Feith, review of *Eloge du Colonialisme*, p. 100.
51 Feith, 'Indonesia's political future'.

7 Indonesia's cataclysm (1965–69)

1 Legge, *Sukarno*, p. 395.
2 Feith, 'President Soekarno, the army and the communists'.
3 Feith, interview, *Lot's Wife*.
4 Tanter, 'Witness denied'.
5 Ibid.
6 Lucian Pye to HF, 19 October 1965, Monash,Folder 144.
7 Herb to Kahin, 20 November 1965, Kahin Papers.
8 Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*, p. 69.
9 Anderson, McVey & Bunnell, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1965, Coup in Indonesia*, pp. 1, 56, 63 (emphasis in the original).

10 Feith, 'Dynamics of guided democracy'.
11 HF to Kahin, 18 February 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
12 HF to Richard Tanter, 8 October 1996, NLA, MS 9926/2.
13 HF to Kahin, 18 February 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
14 Herb was also approached by the editors of *Current Affairs Bulletin* to write something but declined, instead suggesting Lance Castles, who wrote an article anonymously.
15 HF to Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey, 12 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash.
16 See Richard Tanter, 'Witness denied', for a highly critical reading of the *Nation* article, in which he argues that Herb's A and B cases share the assumption that analysis and morality are irreconcilable activities. Despite Herb's defence that the A case was humanitarian and condemning of the killings, Tanter sees it differently: 'A never presents any positive alternative to the acceptance of tragedy and irony, any view of praxis that would seek to move further: outrage and analysis are left isolated and opposed. The end of the dialogue seems to lead the reader with weary resignation to acceptance that nothing is to be done, though perhaps with a bad conscience' (p. 26).
17 Feith, 'President Soekarno, the army and the communists'.
18 Feith, 'Killings in Indonesia'.
19 HF to Richard Tanter, 8 October 1996, NLA, MS 9926/2.
20 Ruth McVey to HF, 25 February 1966, HF Papers, Monash, 1991/9 Box 7.
21 Ben Anderson to HF, 24 February 1966, HF Papers, Monash, 1991/9 Box 7.
22 Betty Feith to Kahin, 10 March 1966, Kahin Papers, Box 5.
23 Ibid.
24 McDougall, 'Australian Press coverage of the Vietnam War in 1965', p. 303.
25 Cotton, '7 weeks in SEA', p. 94. The writer, a Liberal Senator for New South Wales, belonged to the parliamentary delegation to Southeast Asia in mid-1966.
26 Betty Feith to Kahin, 10 March 1966, Kahin Papers, Box 5.
27 Kahin to HF, 14 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
28 Ibid.
29 Chomsky, 'The responsibility of intellectuals'.
30 HF to Alex (no surname), 4 August 1965, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 75.
31 Betty Feith to Kahin, 10 March 1966, Kahin Papers, Box 5.
32 HF to Ben Anderson & Kahin, 29 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
33 Ignatieff, 'Human rights', pp. 317–18.
34 HF to Ben Anderson & Kahin, 29 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
35 Ibid.
36 Rocamora, 'Onghokham, an appreciation'.
37 HF to Ben Anderson and Kahin, 12 March–11 April 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 198.
38 HF to Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey, 12 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash. The letter was not finished and posted until mid-April.
39 Ben Anderson to HF, 1 May 1966, HF Papers, Monash.
40 HF to Kahin, 21 & 30 April 1966, Kahin Papers.
41 Josey, 'Hope after massacre', pp. 565–70.
42 Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese political activity in Indonesia', p. 63, and *Indonesian Chinese in Crisis*, pp. 43–51.
43 Feith, 'The current position of the Indonesian Chinese'.
44 McGregor, *History in Uniform*; McVey, 'The enchantment of the revolution'.
45 McGregor, *History in Uniform*, pp. 49–50, 58–9.
46 Nugroho Notosusanto (Jakarta) to Herb, 27 May 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 509.
47 Geertz to HF, 4 October 1966, HF Papers, Monash, Folder 190.
48 HF to Geertz, 21 October 1966, HF

Papers, Monash, Folder 190.
49 Feith, 'Aftermath of the coup that failed'.
50 Lance Castles to HF, 2 September 1966, HF Papers, Monash.
51 Feith, 'Aftermath of the coup that failed'.
52 Feith, 'The current situation of the Indonesian Chinese'.
53 Kahin to Mr Leslie Kirkley, Oxfam, London, 5 December 1967, Kahin Papers, Box 5.
54 George to Mr Leslie Kirkley, Oxfam, London, 5 December 1967, Kahin Papers, Box 5.
55 HF to Charles Coppel, 18 March 1967, Coppel Papers, Personal archive.
56 Ibid.
57 Feith, 'Aftermath of the coup that failed'.
58 HF to Jamie Mackie, 23 November 1967, Coppel Papers, personal archive.
59 Budiardjo, review of Roosa, *Pretext for Mass Murder*.
60 Sudisman, *Analysis of Responsibility*.
61 Feith, 'Indonesia: Dayak legacy'.
62 Mortimer & Thwaites, 'Manifesto by editors'.
63 HF to Charles Coppel, 14 December 1967, Coppel Papers, Personal archive.
64 HF to Richard Tanter, 8 October 1996, Herb Feith Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
65 Feith, 'Indonesia – Blot on the New Order'.
66 Feith, 'Killings in Indonesia'.
67 HF to Ben Anderson and Ruth McVey, 12 March 1966, HF Papers, Monash.
68 HF to Ed Snyder, 2 August 1968, HF Papers, Monash.
69 Maxwell, 'Soe Hok-Gie'.
70 HF to Ed Snyder, 2 August 1968, HF Papers, Monash.
71 Ed Synder to HF, 5 November 1968, HF Papers, Monash.
72 ASIO File: Herb Feith: F/26/79.
73 Feith, 'Herb Feith', p. 10.
74 Lev, 'Introduction', in Anderson & Kahin, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics*, p. vii.

8 The professional years (1969–77)

1 Illich, 'Outwitting the "developed" nations', p. 20.
2 Illich, 'The cultivation of conspiracy', p. 236.
3 Illich in Smith & Smith, *Lives in Education*, p. 435.
4 HF to Ben Anderson, 25 December 1969, HF Papers, Monash.
5 Anderson & Kahin, *Interpreting Indonesian Politics*.
6 Feith, 'Indonesia's political prisoners'.
7 HF to Lucian Pye, 5 November 1965, HF Papers, Monash.
8 Lucian Pye to HF, 3 May 1967, HF Papers, Monash.
9 HF to Lucian Pye, 3 June 1967, HF Papers, Monash.
10 Anderson, 'In memoriam: Soe Hok Gie', pp. 225–7.
11 HF to John Burton, 11 December 1965, HF Papers, Monash.
12 HF to Kahin, 11 June 1970, Kahin Papers.
13 Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) file: Herbert Feith: F/26/79: 39. As his ASIO file notes, Herb was one of several academics, including Max Teichmann, who spoke at a forum sponsored by the Monash Student Union on the Indo-China war and conscription on 25 June 1970. ASIO opened a file on Herb in 1956 (see ASIO: Feith file, available at National Archives of Australia (www.naa.gov.au), Security and Intelligence Files, Feith, Herbert (Vol. 1: 1956–75), Series A6119, Control Symbol, 3778).
14 HF diary notes, 1 January 1971, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
15 HF diary notes, 3 January 1971, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
16 HF to Kahin, February 1969, Kahin Papers.
17 Chowdhury & Siregar 2004, 'Indonesia's monetary policy dilemma', pp. 140, 141.
18 Saltford, *The United Nations and the Indonesian Takeover of West Papua*.

19 US Embassy, 'Assessment of West Irian situation'. Nixon visited Indonesia with National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger in July 1969 to demonstrate US support for Indonesia's anti-communist government.
20 Ward, *The 1971 Election in Indonesia*, p. 67.
21 Feith, 'Visit to West Irian', p. 117.
22 Kleinman, *What Really Matters*, pp. 71–2.
23 Feith, *Asia's Flashpoint, 1971*, p. 13.
24 Mark Raper later worked with various Jesuit organisations, including the think-tank Asia Bureau Australia, the Jesuit Refugee Service and Jesuit Social Services in Melbourne, and became President of the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania, based in Manila, in 2008.
25 As head of OPSUS in 1971, Moertopo played a crucial part in 'stage-managing and directing the general elections' (Britton, 'The army', p. 86).
26 Moertopo and Major General Benny Murdani led a similar delegation to Cornell to meet Kahin, Anderson, McVey and Bunnell in October 1975 (Kahin, *Southeast Asia*, p. 180).
27 Letter HF (Singapore) to Rex Mortimer, 5 March 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
28 Feith, 'Bangladesh on the morrow of independence'.
29 HF to Ken Ward, 28 March 1972, Personal collection, Ken Ward.
30 HF (Dacca) to Kahin, 25 April 1972, Kahin Papers.
31 HF (Dacca, c/o Australian Embassy) to Bill Liddle, 20 April 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
32 HF to Ken Ward, 28 March & 27 April 1972, Ken Ward Personal Papers.
33 Ben Anderson to HF (Dacca), 4 May 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS9926/2.
34 HF (Dacca) to Kahin, 25 April 1972, Kahin Papers.
35 Ibid.
36 Notes, 'Widjojo re my open letter', 8 February 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/12.
37 Diary notes, 12 June 1974, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
38 HF to Kahin, 11 February 1972, Kahin Papers.
39 Illich, *Deschooling Society*, p. 111.
40 *Lot's Wife*, 'Education: Talk and action', 1972.
41 Feith, 'Herb Feith', p. 9.
42 Feith, 'The message of Ivan Illich'.
43 Rex Mortimer to HF, 23 July 1971, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
44 Feith, 'Growth and development in Asia'.
45 Rob Feith, interview with Herb Feith, Yogyakarta, c1996, original transcript.
46 Rex Mortimer (Sydney) to HF, 7 May 1970, HF Papers, NLA, MS9926/5.
47 Mortimer, *Showcase State*, pp. ix–x.
48 Later published as Feith, 'Growth and development in Asia'.
49 Diary notes, November 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
50 Ibid.
51 Diary notes, 10 December 1972, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27
52 HF to Charles Coppel, 5 February 1973 from CIDOC, Mexico (postcard: image of marketplace), Charles Coppel Personal Papers.
53 HF (CIDOC) to Kahin, 11 February 1973, Kahin Papers.
54 Burkart, 'From the economy to friendship', pp. 154, 155.
55 Herb's notes on talk by Dennis Sullivan, Cuernavaca, 7 February 1973, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
56 '… the scheme has to some extent consciously shunned publicity. It has been particularly careful lest Indonesians come to regard it as "another Western effort that we're supposed to be grateful for"' (Feith, 'Work and identification in Indonesia').
57 Gajardo, 'Ivan Illich', p. 719.
58 HF, letter to Ivan Illich, 5 October 1978, HF Papers, NLA, MS9926/2.
59 Statement of Purpose sent to Cornell University Press, September 1973.

60 Notes, handwritten, n.d., HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
61 In mid-1973 several of the contributors to the volume, including Peter Britton, Alan Smith and Geoff Currey, established the Light, Powder and Construction Works (LPCW), backed by funding from the CAA. LPCW grew out of research they had conducted for CAA into questions of Third World poverty, which pointed to the systemic causes of poverty, which were not simply 'over there' but also in the rich world. They recommended that an agency be established to create an 'action-oriented program of research and education into and about our own society and its relationship to the Third World'. The LPCW produced educational pamphlets and the *Powder Magazine* (eight issues were published between February 1974 and August 1975).
62 Mortimer, introduction to *Showcase State*, p. xiii.
63 Feith, review of *Showcase State*, p. 114.
64 Mortimer, 'From Ball to Arndt', p. 120.
65 Mortimer, *Showcase State*, p. xii.
66 Feith, review of *Showcase State*, p. 117.
67 Papanek, review of *Showcase State*, p. 119.
68 Feith, review of *Showcase State*, p. 114.
69 ASIO File: Herbert Feith: F/26/79.
70 Feith, D., 'A history of Brinsley Road'.
71 HF to Mr T.J. Ford, Assistant Director of Secondary Education, Education Department, Melbourne (copy to Lindsay Thompson MP, Minister of Education), 28 April 1975, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926.
72 Harvey, *Permesta*.
73 Paulo Freire (1921–77) was a Brazilian literacy educator who in the 1960s and '70s pioneered a method of teaching promoting the 'critical consciousness' and a dialogue between teachers, community and students. He is author of the groundbreaking *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Herder & Herder, New York, 1970).
74 Feith & Smith, 'Indonesia', pp. 173–4.
75 Ibid.
76 Herb Feith, Background notes of the current Indonesian crisis, 9 February 1974. HF Papers, NLA, MS9964/11.
77 Crouch, 'Indonesia', pp. 12–13.
78 For a discussion of the background to these events of rivalry and factionalism in the army see Crouch, *The Army and Politics in Indonesia*, pp. 306–17.
79 Fealy, *The Release of Indonesia's Political Prisoners*.
80 Juwono Sudarsono to HF, 11 February 1975, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2. Juwono was involved in the defence of one of those on trial, Sjahrir, an academic close to former PSI leader, Sarbini. He was eventually sentenced to 6.5 years imprisonment.
81 McDonald, 'Lubis arrest indicates growing confidence in Indonesia'.
82 Booth & Glassburner, 'Survey of recent developments', p. 1.
83 Feith, 'Background notes on the current Indonesian crisis', 9 February 1974.
84 Rosendale, 'Survey of recent developments', p 13.
85 Ricklefs, 'Bailey, Sir Kenneth Hamilton (1898–1972)', p. 301.
86 Booth & Glassburner, 'Survey of Recent Developments', p 28.
87 Fealy, *The Release of Indonesia's Political Prisoners*.
88 Feith, review of *Showcase State*, p. 118.
89 Wolfers, *Looking North to South-East Asia*, p. 44.
90 HF to Kahin, 22 October 1975, Kahin Papers.
91 Ball & McDonald, *Death in Balibo, Lies in Canberra*, p. 11; Cotton, *East Timor*, pp. 28–37.
92 Scott, *Last Flight Out of Dili*, p. xi.
93 'Experimental school to be closed', *Age*, 17 December 1975.
94 HF to Ken Ward, 3 July 1975, Ken Ward Personal Papers.
95 Flyer, 'Our school's right to continue', 18 December 1975, authorised by Anatoly Sawenko and Herbert Feith for the parents, teachers and students

of Argo Street (HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2).
96 Handwritten notes, n.d., HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
97 The school eventually continued in some form in other locations. It was at premises in Princes Street, St Kilda, and later moved to Caulfield, where it continues as Caulfield Park Community School (Feith, D., 'A history of Brinsley Road', 1999.)
98 HF to Anton Lucas, 12 July 1975, NLA, MS 9964.
99 HF to Prof. Soedjito Sosrodihardjo, Jurusan Antropologi, Fakultas Ilmu2 Social dan Politik UGM, 19 September 1975, NLA, MS 9964.
100 HF to Dan Lev, 25 February 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
101 HF to Stuart Graham, 14 April 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
102 Feith, 'Political control, class formation and legitimacy in Indonesia'.
103 Ibid.
104 Feith, '"Techno-fascism"'.
105 HF to Rex Mortimer, 8 November 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
106 HF to Barb & Hugh (Rostrevor, SA), 6 July 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/20/2.
107 HF handwritten notes 'Reflections re Israel, TWism etc', 8 September 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/20/2.
108 HF to Lea Jellinek, 2 October 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
109 Rex Mortimer (Moresby) to Herb (Ithaca), 16 November 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
110 HF to Stuart Graham, 27 December 1976, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.

9 Imagining peace (1978–90)

1 Kleinman, *What Really Matters*, p. 10.
2 Hutton & Connors, *A History of the Australian Environment Movement*, p. 137.
3 Betty Feith, Statutory declaration, July 1977, Anton Lucas Papers, NLA, MS 9964.
4 Ormonde, 'Pedal power v. horse power'.
5 'The night they drove old Yellowcake down', *Lot's Wife*, 11 June 1977, pp. 2–4.
6 *Age*, 4 July 1977.
7 Betty Feith, statutory declaration, July 1977, Anton Lucas Papers, NLA, MS 9964.
8 'The night they drove old Yellowcake down', *Lot's Wife*, 11 June 1977, pp. 2–4.
9 Betty Feith to 'All of you', 7 July 1977, Anton Lucas Papers, NLA, MS 9964.
10 HF to Don Emmerson, 23 September 1977, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2. ('Yes, uranium has almost suddenly become a very big issue here. The Labor Party's deciding that it would not be bound to honour contracts [then Prime Minister] Fraser enters into with mining companies has lifted the whole thing from the good-cause level to the centre of the political and business stage.')
11 Betty Feith to 'All of you', 7 July 1977, Anton Lucas Papers, NLA, MS 9964.
12 *Age*, 4 July 1977.
13 Hutton & Connors, *A History of the Australian Environment Movement*, p. 143.
14 Ormonde, 'Pedal power v. horse power'.
15 Dan Lev to HF, 30 September 1977, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
16 Ormonde, 'Pedal power v. horse power'.
17 Bourchier, *Dynamics of Dissent in Indonesia*, p. 39.
18 Bourchier, *Dynamics of Dissent in Indonesia*, p. 39.
19 Lea Jellinek (en route from Jakarta to London) to HF (Confidential), 29–30 September 1977, HF Papers, NLA , MS 9926/2.
20 HF to Jamie Mackie, 15 November 1977, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
21 Jamie Mackie to HF, 23 November 1977, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
22 Rahzen, 'Celebrate for peace'.
23 Hadiz & Dhakidae, *Social Science and Power in Indonesia*, pp. 1, 7, 17.

24 Ganie-Rochman & Rochman, 'Inclusion and exclusion', pp. 203, 197.
25 HF to Ivan Illich, 27 April 1978, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
26 *Indonesia News Selections*, 1977.
27 Ibid.
28 The origins of this type of reading, sharing and translating from the Indonesian press were in the early 1960s, when the Indonesia Study Group, a group initiated by Jamie Mackie and students of Indonesia from across Melbourne met monthly to examine recent news from Indonesia.
29 Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, pp. 88–90.
30 Dan Lev to HF, 30 September 1977, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
31 Reid, 'Indonesian studies at the Australian National University', p. 69. American historian and Cambodiaist David Chandler, who had stood in as Acting Director during Jamie Mackie's recent absences for overseas research, was appointed the CSEAS's second Director commencing in July 1978. Herb later admitted to Chandler that he had voted in favour of his friend David Penny, who also went for the job (interview with author, Clayton, March 2005).
32 Feith, 'From Sukarno to Suharto – A reply to Jamie Mackie', p. 20.
33 Flyer for two free public lectures, August 1978, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
34 HF handwritten 'Notes to self', n.d., HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
35 HF to Ivan Illich, 2 October 1978, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
36 HF handwritten notes, 20 November 1989, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
37 HF on Falk, n.d., HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926.
38 Ken Ward to HF, 6 June 1979, Ken Ward Personal Papers.
39 HF to Ken Ward, 1 July 1979, Ken Ward Personal Papers.
40 Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 92.
41 McGregor, *History in Uniform*.
42 Lucas, *What Makes an Activist?*
43 Lane, *Unfinished Nation*, p. 93.
44 HF to Chris Ledger, 27 November 1993, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
45 HF to Charles Coppel, 12 February 1979, Coppel Personal Papers.
46 Legge, 'In memoriam: Rex Mortimer (1926–1979)', p. 153.
47 Rex Mortimer to HF, 20 October 1979, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
48 HF, 8 August 1979, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
49 Ivan Illich to HF, 9 November 1979, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
50 Rex Mortimer to HF, 20 October 1979, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
51 Mortimer, M., *When Your Partner Dies*, p. 78.
52 HF to Angus McIntyre, 23 March 1980, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/5.
53 Feith, 'The clouds of nuclear war'.
54 Feith, 'Towards a new peace movement', p. 2.
55 Herb's involvement with CICD from 1970 onwards, in its organisation of the Vietnam Moratoriums and Palm Sunday rallies, brought him under the close scrutiny of ASIO (see ASIO: Feith file).
56 Feith, 'Towards a new peace movement', p. 2.
57 Hess & Arnold, *Peace Dossiers Series 1982–1992*.
58 HF to Ben Anderson, 19 October 1980, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
59 Monash Faculty of Economics and Politics handbook, 1983.
60 Feith, 'The clouds of nuclear war'.
61 HF (Tokyo) to Family, 12 December 1980, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/9.
62 HF handwritten notes for address, n.d. (circa 10 December 1980), HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/8.
63 HF (Tokyo) to Family, 12 December 1980, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/9.
64 Dawam Rahardjo, interview with author, Jakarta, August 2005.
65 Heryanto, 'Ideological baggage and orientations of the social sciences in Indonesia', pp. 57–90.
66 HF to Rudolph Mrazek (Prague), 22

October 1980, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
67 HF to 'All of you', 23 May 1981 (At Jin's parents' place in Amsterdam), HF Papers, NLA , MS 9926/9.
68 'Dear All of You', 23 May 1981, NLA, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/9.
69 Lacey, 'Lacey interviews Feith', pp. 6–7.
70 HF to David Penny, 11 September 1983, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
71 HF to Ambasador Thurley, 10 September 1981, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
72 HF to Dawam Raharjo, 9 October 1981, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
73 HF to Johan Galtung, 30 January 1982, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
74 Feith, 'A dialogue between fear and hope', p. 65.
75 Feith, 'Peace politics in the Third World?'
76 HF to Pak Kromo and family, 24 December 1981, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
77 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, 'Human Rights and Conditions of the People of East Timor', pp. xi–xv.
78 Ibid., p. 89.
79 HF handwritten notes, n.d., HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.
80 Feith, 'Peace politics in the Third World?'
81 John Waddingham, interview with author, Perth, 28 May 2005.
82 Feith, 'Peace politics in the Third World?'
83 HF to Nugroho Notsusanto, 20 April 1984, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/9.
84 Feith, 'Peace consciousness in Indonesia', p. 5.
85 McDougall, 'Foreign policy studies in Australia', p. 390.
86 HF to Ken Ward, 4 May 1984, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/14.
87 'Thoughts, Questions and Puzzles after the Sydney University Irian Jaya seminar, 21 August 1984, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/14.
88 Feith, 'Indonesia as a challenge to the Australian peace movement'.
89 Ibid.
90 HF to Ken Ward, 4 May 1984, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/14.
91 Ben Anderson to HF, 14 August 1984, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
92 HF, talk given at ASAA conference, Adelaide, 1984.
93 HF to Ruth McVey, 15 November 1985, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
94 HF to Carmel Budiardjo, 2 May 1985, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
95 Bell, Feith & Hatley, 'The West Papuan challenge to Indonesian authority in Irian Jaya'.
96 Feith, 'Social justice and the larger world', 14 October 1986, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926.
97 Betty Feith to 'Dear neglected friends', 20 January 1987, Anton Lucas Papers, NLA, MS 9964.
98 Feith, 'East Timor: Is a settlement possible?'
99 Carmel Budiardjo to HF, 16 January 1987, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
100 HF to Martin Amis, 30 June 1987, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/17.
101 Amis, *Einstein's Monsters*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1987, p. 9.
102 Boulding, 'Possibilities for peace'.
103 HF to Amal Ichlasul, 27 June 1987, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
104 Loh, 'Remembering Herb Feith (1930–2001)', p. 39.
105 David Mitchell, interview with author, Monash University, Melbourne, March 2005.
106 Kahin to HF, 18 January 1988, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
107 HF to Onghokham, 13 April 1988, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
108 Fax Stuart to Herb, 5 December 1989, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
109 Ibid.
110 HF notes from 1989 Indonesia trip, 7 May 1989, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/10.
111 HF to Hardoyo, 9 June 1990, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/2.
112 HF handwritten notes, 27 July 1990, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/27.

10 Retirement, 'repatterning' and renewal (1991–2001)

1 A term intended to echo *glasnost* and *perestroika*, which described changes in Soviet political thinking in the late 1980s (Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, p. 35).
2 Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, p. 43.
3 Feith, 'Suharto under pressure', p. 3.
4 Cheeseman & Kettle, *The New Australian Militarism*, p. 11.
5 Smith & Kettle, *Threats Without Enemies*, pp. 7, 8, 59.
6 Smith & Kettle, *Threats Without Enemies*; Kettle & Dowrick, *After the Gulf War*; Cheeseman & Kettle, *The New Australian Militarism*.
7 McDougall, 'Foreign policy studies in Australia', p. 390.
8 Cheeseman & Kettle, *The New Australian Militarism*, pp. 11–12.
9 Feith, 'Massacre may change thinking in Jakarta'.
10 East Timor Talks Campaign, September 1991, p. 1.
11 *Green Left Weekly*, 1991.
12 At an Imagining the Future Workshop series on 'East Timor: Towards Peace, Prosperity and Self-determination' held in October–December 1992, Herb spoke on 'Liberation struggles and national and national sovereignty: East Timor is not alone'.
13 Bell, Feith & Hatley, 'The West Papuan challenge to Indonesian authority in Irian Jaya'; Feith & Smith, 'The Kurds: Towards a political solution' & 'The Kurds and self-determination'.
14 UN Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States, Res. 2625/1970.
15 Feith & Smith, 'The Kurds: Towards a political solution'.
16 Senator Gareth Evans to HF, 19 August 1991, NLA MS, MS 9926/13/63; Senator Robert Hill to HF, 9 August 1991, NLA MS, MS 9926/13/63.
17 Walsh, Scott & Feith, *It's Time to Talk*.
18 CAVR, 'Chega!'
19 HF to Marsillam Simanjuntak, 20 November 1991, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
20 Feith, 'Massacre may change thinking in Jakarta'.
21 Feith, 'East Timor and the reputation of Indonesia's Armed Forces', unpublished paper, 9 December 1991.
22 Feith, 'East Timor: The opening up, the crackdown and the possibility of a durable settlement'.
23 HF to Marsillam Simanjuntak, 20 November 1991, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
24 HF to Ben Anderson, 21 November 1991, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
25 Feith, 'New hope for East Timor'.
26 Dewi Fortuna Anwar to HF, 7 July 1990, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
27 Ibid.
28 HF to Ben Anderson, 21 November 1991, NLA, MS 9926/2.
29 HF to Ben Anderson, 6 December 1993, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
30 Feith & Smith, 'The Kurds and self-determination'.
31 Feith, *The East Timor Issue Since the Capture of Xanana Gusmao*.
32 Anderson, 'Gravel in Jakarta's shoes', p. 3.
33 Ben Anderson to HF, 5 December 1993, NLA, MS 9926/2.
34 Boulding, 'Possibilities for peace', p. 2.
35 HF notes for paper, Flinders Conference on Indonesian Culture, 30 September 1991, NLA, MS 9926/3.
36 Brown, 'Indonesian democracy: 1950s and 1990s'.
37 Vatikiotis, 'Travellers' tales'.
38 Ibid.
39 Feith, 'Constitutional democracy', p. 24.
40 Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, p. 153.
41 FEER, 'Opposition nominates Suharto for sixth Presidential term'.
42 Aspinall, *Opposing Suharto*, pp. 6–7, 145–76. Aspinall borrows the term 'semi-opposition' from Juan Jose Linz, 'Opposition to and under an authoritarian regime'.

43 Smith, 'Ethnic problems and constitutional solutions'.
44 Betty Feith to 'Dear All', 29 January 1994, NLA, MS 9926/15.
45 HF addition to ibid.
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71 Richardson, 'Asian financial crisis'.
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78 Talk to 'Whither Indonesia?' forum at NCCA, 4 June 1998, CAC Personal Archive.
79 Feith, 'Last-ditch stand politics revisited'.
80 Some years earlier Herb himself had used the term 'academic celebrities' to describe some foreign Indonesianists (Feith, 'Feith on Soedjatmoko', unpublished notes, 4 March 1990, HF Papers, NLA, MS 9926/12). Romano, *Politics and the Press in Indonesia*, p. 143; Heryanto, 'Public intellectuals, media and democratisation'.
81 Van Klinken, Gerry, 'The battle for history after Suharto', p. 236.
82 Romano, *Politics and the Press in Indonesia*, pp. 143–8.
83 HF to Ben Anderson, 15 June 1999, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.
84 Feith, *Soekarno Militer Dalam Demokrasi Terpimpin*.
85 Vern Bailey, interview with author, Canberra, February 2006.
86 HF to 'Friends', 3 June 1999, NLA MS, MS 9926/2/124.
87 HF to Don Emmerson, 8 November 1966, Monash: Folder 509.
88 'Wawancara Herb Feith: "Mega Presiden, Amien Oposisi"', *Tempo*;

Prasetya, 'Herbert Feith: "Mega jadi Bung Karno, Amien jadi Bung Hatta"'; *Tajuk*, 'Wawancara Herbert Feith: Koalisi: PAN Pegang kunci posisi tengah'.

89 HF to 'Friends', 3 June 1999, NLA MS, MS 9926/2/124.

90 KPU, *Pemilu 1999*; Aspinall, 'Semi-opponents in power', pp. 122–3.

91 Crouch, 'The TNI and East Timor policy', p. 147.

92 Habibie, *Decisive moments*.

93 Robinson, '*If you leave us here, we will die*'; Dunn, *East Timor*; Marker, *East Timor*.

94 Habibie, *Decisive Moments*, p. 234.

95 Ball & McDonald, *Death in Balibo, Lies in Canberra*. Dewi Foruna Anwar's PhD thesis is 'ASEAN as an aspect of Indonesian foreign policy', Monash University, 1990.

96 Crouch, 'The TNI and East Timor policy', p. 146.

97 Feith, *The East Timor Issue Since the Capture of Xanana Gusmao*.

98 UN negotiator Jamsheed Marker believes that Habibie had already decided on this course of action before receiving Howard's letter, and simply used the letter as an instrument for its implementation (Marker, *East Timor*, p. 129).

99 Robinson, '*If you leave us here, we will die*', p. 153.

100 ANFREL, 'East Timor', p. 43.

101 Ibid., p. 74.

102 Van Klinken, H., 'Taking the risk, paying the price', p. 103.

103 Ball & McDonald et al., *Masters of Terror*.

104 McIntyre, interview, *Encounter*, ABC Radio.

105 ANFREL, 'East Timor', p. 72.

106 Robinson believes that the murderous rampage of militia and TNI after the announcement of results on 4 September and before the Australian-led UN-authorised International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) arrived on 20 September, may have involved a strategic avoidance of harming foreigners. As Robinson sees it, the fact that foreigners were not killed at this stage of the campaign of violence serves as further evidence of its systematic and planned nature ('*If you leave us here, we will die*', pp. 159–60).

107 Betty Feith to 'Dear all', 16 September 1999, Lucas Papers NLA MS, MS 9964.

108 Van Klinken, G., 'Big states and little independence movements', pp. 214–15.

109 Betty Feith to 'Dear all', 16 September 1999, Lucas Papers NLA, MS 9964.

110 Herb Feith, seminar FISIPOL, 10 September 1999, NLA, MS 9926/13/48.

111 Ibid.

112 Harsono, 'Indonesia', p. 77.

113 Maher, 'The perils of peace',p.30.

114 Betty Feith to 'Dear all', 16 September 1999, Lucas Papers, Manuscripts, NLA, MS 9964.

115 Coppel, *Violent Conflicts in Indonesia*.

116 *Jakarta Post*, 'Australian analyses first minister proposal', 20 May 2000.

117 Li, 'Herb Feith yang Biasa Saja!'

118 HF to Jim Lawler, 7 July 2000, NLA MS, MS 9926/2.

119 Feith, 'George Aditjondro and East Timor'.

120 HF, email correspondence with Bill Liddle, November 2001. Published in part in Feith & Liddle, 'Bush, Osama and the planet'.

121 Feith & Liddle, 'Bush, Osama and the planet'.

122 McAfee, *Democracy and the Political Unconscious*, pp. 82–3. Notes for Yogyakarta seminar, November 2001.

123 Olle Tonquist, notes on Herb's seminar in email to Indonesian studies List, 18 November 2001.

124 Mares, *Borderline*, pp. 121–41.

125 Mares, *Borderline*, p. 133.

126 Ibid., p. 3.

127 HF handwritten notes, HF Papers, NLA MS, MS9926/2/20.

128 Feith, 'Antidote to parochialism'.

129 Simbolon, 'Kenangan terakhir dengan Prof Herbert Feith'.
130 Wang, 'Divisive modernity', p. 8.

Requiem

1 Ardiansyah, 'Solemn gathering to farewell Herb Feith'.
2 Obituaries for Herb Feith were published in Australia's major national dailies, and a special *In Memoriam* program was dedicated to him on Radio National's *Asia Pacific* program. More than a year later, Radio National's *Encounter* program ran a special tribute also.
3 Mohamad, 'Herb'.
4 Anthony Reid, 16 November 2001, email correspondence.
5 Mohamad, 'Herb'.

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Glossary

ABRI	Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Armed Forces of the Republic of Indonesia)
ACC	Australian Council of Churches
ACFOA	Australian Council for Overseas Aid
ACICIS	Australian Consortium for 'In-Country' Indonesian Studies
ACTU	Australian Council of Trade Unions
adat	customary law
AETA	Australian East Timor Association
AETIVP	Australia East Timor International Volunteers Project
AFC	Act of Free Choice
AGPS	Australian Government Publishing Service
AIA	Australia Indonesia Association
AIAV	Australia Indonesian Association of Victoria
AIIA	Australian Institute of International Affairs
AJWS	Australian Jewish Welfare Society
ALP	Australian Labor Party
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
ANU	Australian National University
ASAA	Asian Studies Association of Australia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASIO	Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation
AUS	Australian Union of Students
AWD	Action for World Development
BAKIN	Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara (State Intelligence Coordinating Agency)
Baperki	Badan Permusjawaratan Kewarganegaraan Indonesia (Consultative Body for Indonesian Citizenship)
benteng	fortress
betjak; *becak*	pedicab, tricycle
bupati	district head, regent

CAA	Community Aid Abroad
CAVR	Comissão de Acolhimento, Verdade e Reconciliação de Timor Leste (Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation of Timor Leste)
CENKIM	Central Komite Indonesia Merdeka (Central Committee for Indonesian Independence)
CGMI	Concentratie Gerakan Mahasiswa Indonesia (Indonesian Student Movement Concentration)
CIDOC	Centro Intercultural de Documentación (Intercultural Documentation Centre)
CMIP	Cornell Modern Indonesia Program
CNRT	Conselho Nacional de Resistência Timorense (National Council of Timorese Resistance)
CPA	Communist Party of Australia
CRNM	Conselho Nacional da Resistência Maubere (National Council of the Maubere Resistance)
CSEAS	Centre of Southeast Asian Studies
CSPS	Centre for Security and Peace Studies
cukong	a relationship between Chinese business and elite figures in politics and the military
CUP	Cambridge University Press
daerah istemewa	special regional autonomy
Darul Islam	armed Islamic movement aimed at establishing an Islamic state (lit. House of Islam)
Dasa Sila Bandung	Ten Bandung Principles (agreement reached at Asia–Africa conference, Bandung, April 1955)
demokrasi	democracy
demokrasi yang ter pimpin	guided democracy
demoralisasi	demoralisation
desa	village
Dewan Nasional	National Council
DPR	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat: Legislative Assembly
DPRD	Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (assembly at provincial, regional or municipal level)
FEER	*Far Eastern Economic Review*
GESTAPU	Gerakan Tiga Puluh September (30th September Movement)
GKI	Indonesian Council of Churches
GOC	Good Offices Committee
Golkar	Golongan Karya (Functional Groups)
hak asasi manusia	human rights
Hari Pahlawan Nasional	National Heroes Day
HMI	Himpunan Mahasiswa Islam (Muslim student organisation)
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor
kabupaten	district, regency
kain	cloth; fabric worn as clothing
KAMI	Kesatuan Aksi Mahasiswa Indonesia: Indonesian University Student Action Front
kampung, *kampong*	small village

KAPPI	Kesatuan Aksi Pemuda dan Pelajar Indonesia: Indonesian Youth and Students' Action Front
kebaya	woman's blouse worn with sarong
keluarga	family
Kempen	Kementerian Penerangan (Ministry of Information)
keterbukaan	openness
KIPER	Komisi Independen Pemantau Pemungutan Suara (Independent Committee for Monitoring Balloting)
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands Indies Army)
KOPASSUS	Komando Pasukan Khusus (Special Command Unit)
kretek	clove cigarettes
Lebaran	Festive period following the fasting month of Ramadan
LP3ES	Lembaga Penelitian, Pendidikan dan Penerangan Ekonomi dan Sosial (Institute for Social and Economic Research, Education and Information)
Malari	Malapetaka Januari (January Disaster)
Masjumi	Islamic-based political party
MPR	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (People's Consultative Assembly)
MPRS	Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (Provisional People's Consultative Assembly)
Muhammadiyah	modernist Muslim organisation
MUP	Melbourne University Press/Publishing
negara	state
NGO	non-government organisation
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
NLA	National Library of Australia
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama (Revival of the Religious Scholars), a traditionalist Muslim organisation
NUAUS	National Union of Australian University Students
NYT	*New York Times*
OPM	Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement)
OSB	Overseas Services Bureau
OUP	Oxford University Press
PAN	Partai Amanat Nasional (National Mandate Party)
Pancasila	five basic principles of the Indonesian state (state philosophy)
Parkindo	Partai Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Christian Party)
PDI	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democracy Party)
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle)
pegawai	civil servant
Permesta	Piagam Perjuangan Semesta (Charter of Total Struggle); a regional rebellion in Sulawesi and Eastern Indonesia, 1957–61
PETA	Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Homeland)
PGI	Persatuan Gereja Indonesia (Union of Churches)
PGRS	Pasukan Gerilya Rakyat Sarawak (Communist-led Sarawak People's Guerrilla Force)
PKB	Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (National Awakening Party)

PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PMKRI	Perhimpunan Mahasiswa Katolik Republik Indonesia (Catholic university students' association)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party)
PPP	Partai Persatuan Pembangunan (United Development Party)
PRD	Partai Rakyat Demokrasi (People's Democratic Party)
PRRI	Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia); a regional rebellion in Sumatra, 1958–61
PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist Party)
QUNO	Quaker United Nations Office
reformasi	reformation
Replita	Five Year Development Plan
SAP	Secure Australia Project
SCM	Student Christian Movement
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SMH	*Sydney Morning Herald*
SRC	Student Representative Council
SWCU	Satya Wacana Christian University
tapol	*tahanan politik* (political prisoner)
Tentara Peladjar	Student Army
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Army)
UGM	Gadjah Mada University
UI	University of Indonesia
ulama	Muslim religious teacher or leader
UN	United Nations
UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
VAPS	Victorian Association for Peace Studies
VGS	Volunteer Graduate Scheme
VIREC	Victorian International Emergency Refugee Council
warung	small shop, stall
wayang	shadow play with leather puppets
WEA	Workers' Educational Association
WNA	Warga Negara Asing (foreigner; alien citizen)
WOMP	World Order Models Project
WSR	World Student Relief

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Herb Feith came to Australia as a Jewish refugee from war-torn Europe in 1939 and went on to become a renowned and passionate scholar of Indonesia. He died tragically in Melbourne in 2001.

An inspiring figure, Feith was a pioneer in relations between Australia and Indonesia; a volunteer and civil servant working alongside Indonesians; a leading scholar, analyst and teacher; and an activist fighting for a better outcome for the impoverished and oppressed in Indonesia and around the world. He pioneered the influential program now known as Australian Volunteers International.

This is the story of Feith and his many extraordinary achievements. Indonesia was the focus of Feith's work, scholarship and activism for fifty years, so this is also the story of a tumultuous period in Indonesian history and the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

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